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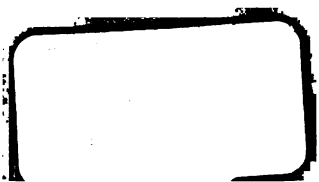
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FAMILY RECORDS;

OR

THE TWO SISTERS.

BY Susan Maria Campbell,
LADY CHARLOTTE BURY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL I.

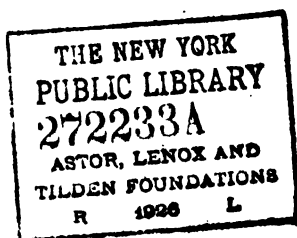
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FAMILY RECORDS.

CHAPTER I.

"Heaven forming each on other to depend,—
A master, or a servant, or a friend,—
Bids each on other for assistance call,
Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all.
Wants, frailties, fashions, closer still ally
The common interest, or endear the tie.
To these we owe true friendship, love sincere,
Each home-felt joy that life inherits here."

POPE.

"WHAT can be the cause of your abstraction, dear Margaret," said the beautiful Susan Falkland to her sister, who was gazing intently from her bed-room window at the scene before her, apparently forgetful that her *toilette* was still unfinished, while Susan was engaged with the arrangment of her hair. "You have not uttered a word for this half hour, and you are not usually so slow in preparation for a fine day's enjoyment." A scarcely audible sigh was breathed at the conclusion of these words; and Margaret turned hastily from the objects of her late contemplation; to catch the reason of a sadness which her quick affection had perceived in her sister's manner. "You shall soon hear all that was passing in my mind, dear Susan."

"What! *all*, Margaret?"

"Yes, yes, all," rejoined she, as the mantling blood in her laughing cheeks almost convinced her more serious sister that she would not be as able as she was willing to fulfil her promise.

"Well then, first of all, as I threw open my window, and heard the sound of the mower's scythe, and the chirping of those dear swallows, who have actually begun to build two nests in this niche; I will confess that the sweet air of this spring day seemed sweeter

when my old nurse's superstition came to my mind; and I thought that you and I, darling Susan, should meet the fulfilment of our wishes on the same day. Then I thought of our poor dear father, and how sad he would be to part with us both: and so I sate down, with a more sober, and I hope less selfish feeling, to think of him, when I heard the laborers' breakfast bell, and saw a number of them crowding under the shade of the great maple tree to meet their children, with their meal in handkerchiefs and pitchers. They looked so picturesque that I began to sketch them; my old favorite Donald, was the first to take his bonnet off his reverend looking head, and then the rest followed his example, and they said a long thanksgiving before they opened their bundles. What a lesson to us, Susan! at least to me, for I am so thoughtless, I scarcely ever remember to say grace when"——

"When," interrupted her sister, who marked her hesitation; "when there is any one near," quickly rejoined Margaret, "in whose conversation I am interested. But never mind that. The history of my meditations is not yet completed; and now, do listen to me, for I think, Susan, you can help me in a plan I have been framing in this wise head of mine. Do you see that very large ship to the right of the bay? It is a brig which Donald told me is to sail next week for America, laden with poor emigrants. The Mac Leans and the Mac Intyres and the Cullens are all going in her; but I am not so much interested in them. They are well provided for, and take their wives and children, and all that they care for, with them, full of hope and happiness; but poor Mary is breaking her heart, because Dugald Sinclair told her, the other day, that he must give up the hope of marrying her, and go also as the only means he can devise of procuring a livelihood for himself and his aged mother, who, you know, is a widow. He used to hold a farm of Eric Hamilton; but since he has sold that part of his estate, poor

Dugald has been turned out by the present landlord, and, from one cause or other, he has been obliged to sell all his goods to procure a wretched lodging for his old mother, who is too infirm to accompany him abroad. It would have grieved your heart, dear Susan, to see the distress of poor Mary, as she related the history of his misfortunes to me, sobbing piteously: and I wish you could help me in collecting a little money to keep Dugald at home until some employment can be found for him. Perhaps papa would take him into one of his farms, or perhaps I might speak to Eric Hamilton, and ask *him* if any thing could be done."

"I will willingly lend you my aid," rejoined Susan, "though I fear our united riches can scarcely effect your purpose: but make haste, dear, for the chapel bell has begun, and you will be late."

In a few moments, the sisters, arm in arm, were hastening to the chapel, where General Falkland and his household assembled every morning to listen to a portion of scripture and prayer reverently pronounced by the lips of his old chaplain. This gentleman had entered the family as tutor to General Falkland's only son, who had fallen an early prey to that fatal disease which wastes so many of the fairest flowers of our climate. Mr. Mac Farlane had remained ever since with the General, as his friend and companion; he was also the preceptor and faithful counsellor of his household and dependents.

It is a pleasant sight to behold the master of a family worshipping his God with those dearest to him, and daily engaging his dependents in the same reasonable service; when his temper and habits and occupations bear witness to his sincerity; there can be few better inducements to others to set the same example.

Kneeling by General Falkland, whose blanched head rested on his slender hands, were the graceful forms of his two daughters. Three young men of elegant

appearance joined their assembly, which for the rest consisted of decently attired household servants; and those country people, who residing in the immediate neighborhood, were invited to partake daily of the means of spiritual teaching, as well as the substantial comforts which the good General's charity provided for them.

As the family left the chapel, many were the blessings secretly bestowed on them by their poor but grateful dependents, and many a heartfelt wish for the present and future well-being of the lovely girls, who had ever a word or look of kindness doubling the value of their charitable actions.

It would have been difficult, indeed, for any person to have gazed upon their beautiful countenances, or watched the varying graces of their movements, without a feeling of more than common interest.

Susan, whose height, somewhat superior to that of her sister, lent dignity to her measured though light step, leaned on her father's arm with a look of confiding tenderness. Dark masses of brown hair were plaited in wreaths around a lofty brow of snow, which seemed, indeed, the throne of high and holy thoughts, tempered by woman's soft affections. Her features, chiselled with delicate refinement, escaped the harshness of Roman contour, though the slightly aquiline nose lent expression superior to the regularity of the Grecian. Her complexion, which never glowed with the faintest rose-tint, except in moments of intense excitement, was pale as hue of health could be; but the ruby tints of her smiling and delicate mouth, and the deep brown of her straightly pencilled eyebrows relieved her coloring from insipidity, and shed an increasing softness over the melting

“Blue of her large loving-eye.”

Her pale cheek received as it were a tinge of rose as she passed her sister, who, at that moment had accepted the proffered arm of young Eric Hamilton.

Blushing, and smiling, and almost bounding along the corridor, Margaret led the way to the breakfast room. The morning sun shone brightly through the long arched windows, and brightened into gold the light ringlets which played in rich profusion about her mantling cheeks and snowy neck, shading her laughing blue eye, as the slender boughs of the birken tree play over the sparkling stream. Her pearly teeth, disclosed by mingled smiles of youth, health, and joy, lent new radiance to her expression, each moment that she looked on or spoke to those she loved, and happy might *he* have been, on whom she now bestowed these smiles, had not a more intense but ill-fated attachment already filled his devoted heart.

Ah! had she known this at that early period of those sunny, bright, and trusting hours, she might have been spared the chilling lessons of after days: but would her heart have been so pure? would her will have been so chastened? would her lot have been so happy in the true estimate of happiness? *We* know but little, darkling is *our* way; but He who has the government, and is the arbiter of every event, can guide, and will bless all those who seek Him.

Few would have had the clear-sightedness to read in the glad countenance of Eric Hamilton, at that moment, aught but satisfaction in the society of the charming girl to whom he spoke, or to discover in his youthful and manly face traces of deep passion, and wild unruly feelings. Like the youthful Saxon of old, his complexion, at first sight betokened him to be of northern blood; and but for the dark eyelashes and eye-brows, which shaded the upper part of his countenance, he would have been too fair; but his high marked features relieved them from effeminacy, while the firmly knit limbs, the breadth of shoulder, and tall grandeur of his figure, gave manly dignity to his graceful person. Those who knew him well, lamented that one ensnaring vice had already

led him far beyond the bounds of prudence and discretion, and stripped him of the only earthly hope which to him seemed happiness.

Following General Falkland and his fair daughters was the young Lord de Tracy, the son of a rich Irish peer. Though not regularly handsome, he had that indefinable air of elegance, which, even in the highest circles, is not acquired except where there exists mental refinement. Perhaps, indeed, it was that which constituted the chief charm of Lord de Tracy's manner, for his taste amounted sometimes to fastidiousness, and there was a doubtful cast about his smile which almost betrayed a sarcastic judgment, belying the flattering strain of his language.

Such was his expression as he looked on Eric and Margaret; but one more soft, and not the less interesting from being mingled with the fear which belongs but to one feeling of man's breast, played upon his features as he addressed Susan. They only conveyed the usual salutations of the morning; but they were the first words he had spoken to her whom he prized beyond every other human being; and his whole being assumed a more endearing aspect when he thought of or addressed her.

It was at Walroad Castle, therefore, that he appeared to the best advantage; and it was no matter of surprise to the friends of General Falkland, that, rich as was Lord de Tracy in the best gifts of nature and of fortune, the kind-hearted and single-minded General beheld in his prepossessing address, the promise both of moral excellence and mental superiority.

It was not so easy to ascertain, by Susan's manner in what light she viewed his attentions. The gentle tones of her voice when addressed to him were gentle too. Her eye could scarcely look severe, though to him it seemed almost awful. Her placid smile was given to all, though to some it might wear a more flattering expression than to others. At times, the full

and loving heart would throb with an emotion, which, though quickly checked by the dictates of duty, and a holier affection, could not be wholly stifled; but lent a glowing brightness to the eye, and a tender enchantment to the smile. It was not when Lord de Tracy addressed her that such was to be sought or found.

He dared not think so; and the dread of failing even to excite such indications of feeling, lent additional zest to the eagerness with which he sought to win her favor.

Last among those who composed the breakfast party were the chaplain, and the son of General Falkland's best and earliest friend, since whose death young Evelyn Marchmont was wont to be a frequent resident at Walrond Castle. The same qualities which had endeared the father to General Falkland shone forth in the amiable character of his son, and seemed to restore the General to the happy days of his early friendship.

Few could behold the dark yet soft eye, the open brow, the calm and dignified, yet kind and warm expression of Evelyn's countenance, without acknowledging at once the power of goodness to beautify outward appearance: yet his was the worth which can only be fully appreciated by those who have drawn from the same unfailing source. Grace seemed as if it had found less to contend with in Evelyn's gentle nature than it is wont to meet in the sons of clay: not that he was meek from want of spirit to apprehend injury; but higher principles than those of mere worldly honor, directed his actions and actuated his conduct. A few of those who scarcely knew him, sneered at his retiring and quiet manner; but those well acquainted with the high worth of his character, the keenness of his feelings, and the warmth and devotedness of his heart, valued him, if not as highly as he deserved, yet more so than his humility allowed him to expect.

It was scarcely possible for any who breathed the same atmosphere with General Falkland's daughters (at least among the young) not to experience the influence of their ever varying charms; and Evelyn, whose heart had once expanded but to the general law of love, which seemed to pervade his view of every living thing, could not resist the fascination. The secret was his own; but the object of his preference had long been decided in his own breast, *whose* presence it was that gave the lustre of enjoyment to every passing hour, whose approbation was necessary to the complete satisfaction of duty he knew, and knew too well.

Such were the guests who assembled round General Falkland's table at the early breakfast hour of Walrond Castle. There are many who regard breakfast as the most unsocial meal of the day, who think that the party which separated, gay and lively, and perhaps loving, in the evening, meet in the morning with a degree of stiffness, and dullness, and apathy, which in the country can only be relieved by the entrance of newspapers and letters, or by the signal to separate once more for the sports of the field, or the cares of the household. There are those who eat their first morsel in solitude and in silence, lamenting the one, and only interrupting the other by sighs, while the vacant eye fixes on inanimate objects, become almost hateful by their well-known forms, so often looked at in the same disconsolate and lonely hours.

There are those who hurry over this hour, or rather the moments of a quarter of such an hour, as a necessary evil, that they may repair to the cares and business of a life of mental labor. There are those who think not at all, and begin their day when the sun has long past the meridian, with a yawn and a regret. No thanksgiving wakes upon their lips as they lift their drowsy eye-lids from a pillow rendered uneasy by dissipation and false excitement; no bright

and busy hopes fill their minds, while they adorn their persons with the *demi toilette of fashionable carelessness*, and begin the day with a meal tasteless and joyless, but which they lounge over till the hour returns when they may again mingle in the whirl of ceaseless intoxication called "pleasure." To all such, the hour of breakfast may be looked upon as the least pleasant of the many uneasy ones they spend; but not so did it appear to the inmates of Walrond Castle.

Though often bowed down by the memory of past misfortune, General Falkland was still strong in mental vigour, which seemed to lend a degree of activity to his body, almost prejudicial to his delicate frame.

Many an hour before he met with the inmates of his house he had spent in the study of God's holy Word and the arrangement of useful business, and it was to him a relaxation and a luxury to see his dear children with their young smiling faces enjoying the society of those whose united talents and beauty gathered around them.

To his daughters it was ever a pleasing time, for they loved to have some word of added kindness with which to greet him. To place his footstool, to lay before him some of the choicest flowers, or arrange some little plan for his delight. These were to them the daily charm of the breakfast hour; and oh! how anxiously was it looked for by those who loved them, those only can tell, who have experienced the charm of opening their eyes beneath the same roof that covers the beloved one; who have counted every moment till they shall hear the tones of a voice prized beyond the sweetest music, or gaze on a countenance which the most retentive memory could but faintly trace before the mental vision.

Happy hour to the young—the hopeful—the virtuous of intention! May the sun shine brightly round your board, and may its evening smile, if less dazzling, be yet more serene!

CHAPTER II.

"Life, I repeat, is energy of love,
Divine or human; exercised in pain,
In strife, and tribulation; and ordained,
If so approved, and sanctified, to pass
Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy."

WORDSWORTH.

GENERAL FALKLAND was the youngest son of his family; and as his elder brother was sole heir to his father's property, he entered the army at an early age, with no prospect for the comfort of his after years, but advancement in that profession. Born of an ancient Scottish family, like many of his countrymen of the same condition, his father's lands were far more extensive than productive; and it was perhaps in favor of all parties that the proud law which entails the whole portion on the eldest son was enforced in his family, since a division would have lessened the comforts of one, without greatly enhancing those of the other.

Young, active, and full of hope, the heart of General Falkland bounded at the prospect of success in arms which seemed to open before him; nor was he disappointed. His career in India was brilliant and prosperous; and he had returned to his native country still in the vigour of life—high in command—and with a name honorably prominent in the most celebrated campaigns of that period.

General Falkland returned home unmarried. His well-earned renown and noble birth insured him a welcome reception to the highest circles; and the fascinations of person and manner which he possessed rendered him a universal favorite of the fair; but to one alone did he devote his every power to please; nor did he strive in vain.

The beautiful Lady Louisa Clifford scarcely entering into womanhood, was gifted beyond her years with sense and worth rarely united to so much loveliness.

Her entrance into the world had been hailed by the flattering incense of general praise, and particular homage; but she gave to him alone the enchantment of her young heart's love, and the fond assurance of being in life and death only his.

On that delightful certainty, General Falkland was fain to lean; for they had to encounter what was to her an insuperable obstacle—the opposition of her parents.

Lord Clifford, equally proud and ambitious, pertinaciously refused his consent, on the score of General Falkland's want of fortune.

For years were the health and spirit of Lady Louisa wasted in that sickening pang of hope deferred.

Faithful still to one, though in the midst of a throng of lovers and admirers, many of whom sought to swerve her from her first affection.

On the death of his brother, who had never married, General Falkland became heir to his father's estates; and Lord Clifford's only objection being thus removed, their constancy was rewarded, and they were at length united. The lapse of years, and pining anxiety, had reduced Lady Louisa to a state of health so delicate, so frail, that her pale countenance seemed scarcely to belong to one of earth.

With a view to revive what never could be restored again, though nurtured by love's tenderest care, General Falkland took his bride to the more genial climate of the south, almost immediately after their union. Three short years was the sum of their wedded life—years of uninterrupted union, and devoted tenderness, but impaired by the unceasing dread of losing so much happiness. Unlike the generality of those who sink beneath the wasting hand of consumption, Lady Louisa

was fully aware of the nature of her disease; and, ever mindful of the great first cause of all sickness and all sorrow, felt this, as in every other circumstance of life, with her beloved husband, and looked upon their present enjoyment as something beyond the ordinary lot of sinful mortality. While she patiently awaited the summons which was to sever her from so blissful a tie, she accused herself constantly of want of gratitude and devotion, since the sad thought that she must so soon leave the partner of her joy to suffer and to mourn, too often clouded the heavenly prospect set before her.

Two daughters were born to them in the first years of their marriage. Scarcely had Lady Louisa given birth to a son, when, leaving this last consolation to cheer her bereaved husband, she breathed her parting sigh upon his bosom, and gently sunk into earth's last slumber—to wake but in heaven.

Having laid her remains in the English cemetery at Leghorn, General Falkland hastened to his now bereaved home with his three little ones, resolving to devote his life to them, and the pursuit of every useful and beneficial object for his friends and dependents. And truly seldom did more blessed result proceed from a determination not lightly made, because under the sway of powerful emotion, amid the sighs and tears of afflicted nature, but also sanctified by prayer, and drawn from the source of all holiness. Long after success had rewarded, in many instances, such virtuous endeavors, the humility of General Falkland remained unimpaired: his dread of failing still increased, and his unceasing diligence in the use of every means for the education of his children, and the welfare of all within the sphere of his influence.

What mortal judge could or would have deemed that such a character—so gentle, so amiable, so purified in mind, so chastened in heart—should require the fiery trial which yet awaited him?

The finest gold will stand the most refinement; and such of human kind was General Falkland. Scarcely had his son reached the age of fifteen, when the sickness which had long given anxiety to the heart of a doting father, increasing tenderness to the affection of his sisters, and redoubled zeal and love to the instructions and advice of his friend and preceptor, terminated fatally.

The early years of this cherished boy had given promise of all that was most amiable and endearing to to his sorrowing parent and friends; there were few cheeks unstained—few hearts unmoved—as the melancholy procession bore the remains of the beloved youth to his last earthly home: and long and deep was the mourning of Walrond Castle. Time indeed, which lends its soothing and the more blessed and permanent influence of Christian resignation, served in some measure to alleviate the heart-rending pangs of his afflicted father; but never does such a sorrow leave its victim as it finds him, and never again did the General resume that health or those spirits which had seemed to dawn again after his first bereavement; but the smiling graces of his lovely daughters, their fond affection, and the unceasing tenderness of such attentions as woman only knows how to bestow, gradually aroused their dejected father in some degree from his affliction; nor did he lose a sense of the consolation arising from the society of the amiable Evelyn, the son of his earliest and dearest friend.

He was some years senior to his departed son, but had been the companion of his studies and amusements—his gentle and friendly monitor on many occasions where the advice of one less sympathising in the feelings of youth might have been disregarded.

A combined tie of gratitude and friendship therefore united to place Evelyn as it were in the room of his lost child in the affections of General Falkland; and a more grateful and filial return has seldom been paid

by one similarly situated. Next to his own father, Evelyn loved and revered his elder friend with all the devotedness of his nature; and precious to him were those early days spent with that dear old man and his daughters.

He almost reproached himself for feeling so averse to return home when the seasons came in which he was expected there; nor was he for some time aware of the secret spell which bound him in fetters never to be loosed, to that most loved spot on earth. Who that has ever known something of that secret but powerful sway which a pure untold affection holds over the young, will wonder that, nursed as affection was by daily intercourse with all that was most endearing in female beauty of mind and person, his tenderness should possess all the doubts and anxieties as well as the enchantment and the joy of love? His passion remained a secret, not only to its object, but also to General Falkland; for, accustomed as he had been to regard Evelyn in the light of a brother to his children, he scarcely observed the various emotions which to a stranger's eye might have been betrayed when in the presence of the youngest of the fair sisters; or when he heard her named, if for a moment they were separated.

A few years spent on the Continent had served to enlarge his ideas, and improve his tastes; but not to take from his manner the charm of youthful modesty, which in Evelyn was not the effect of awkwardness or inward self-love, but the evidence of genuine purity of heart, unsullied by the world's contamination. It was difficult to resist the charm of his manner. United to this diffidence, a confiding sense of the approbation of those who loved him, and a watchful eagerness to anticipate their every wish, not only in matters of importance, but in those daily nameless little services which strew the path of life with flowers. Yes, flowers they are—those courtesies which even

the sacred Word condescends to enjoin; and which, like the modest daisy, may beautify the rocky hill, the else barren moor, the lonely path, the secluded nook, as well as the borders of the cultivated garden, or the emerald of the smoothy verdant lawn.

Desirous as General Falkland felt that the minds of his children should be cultivated by useful study, and their tastes nurtured by the prosecution of those accomplishments to which their wishes led them, he had not thought as yet on the formation of attachments which constitute the chief happiness of woman's fate; or if such had ever mingled with his contemplations, they had been apart from any individual as being the arbiter of their destiny. He rightly judged that where the heart is pure by exercising the love of God and man, and the judgment enlightened by the study of holy and virtuous principle, the fate which Providence allots to such will be met serenely, if not joyfully; nor did he fear the result for those over whom his heart yearned with all the devotion and the tenderness of a father's love, as he saw his daughters' mental and personal charms daily increasing. He wished them to participate in the society of those who would increase their interests, and appreciate their excellencies; and for this purpose, he resolved that they should accompany him in his first visit he had made to London since his widowhood. Those only who have known what violence is done to the heart by renewing a long-broken intercourse with the world after years of suffering and sorrow in which that world cannot participate, after spending them in the society of such only who have watched every look and movement, and anticipated the possibility of a rude or jarring touch to the bruised feelings, can enter into such emotions as were experienced by General Falkland, when a sense of duty to his daughters brought him once more back to the scenes of his youth and early happiness.

True it is that he found on his first return to London the truth of those words, that he who forgets the world is "by the world forgot." But there were a few who recognised the once popular and universally *recherché* Adrian Falkland in the broken down, though still elegant person of the General; and through the medium of those few who failed not to spread the fame of the beauty and grace of his daughters, he soon found himself surrounded by a host of daily visitors: some companions of earlier years; some, among the young and fashionable, and many more among that nameless and numberless band of idlers who are wont to hover round the doors of the hospitable, whenever such wonders appear in the heartless circles of the gay world. It was then only that General Falkland began to tremble lest the fascination of such a life to the young and beautiful, might exercise too powerful a sway over the minds of his daughters. It was then that he first looked around the circle of his acquaintance with the thought which among them were most likely to insure a virtuous woman's happiness; and on which, among their many admirers, they seemed to smile with most approval.

Lord de Tracey, the only son of a noble house, of whose character and manners General Falkland had the highest opinion, was one of the most constant of their visitors, and him General Falkland regarded with unmixed favor. He scarcely knew whether his attentions were most devoted to Susan, or to her sister; for, with diplomatic care, he took pains to conceal at once from them and from the world that his intentions were of a particular nature; but the good General thought, whichever was the object of his admiration, she would be a happy woman; and he failed not to be pressing in his invitation to Lord de Tracey to visit them on their return to Walrond Castle. Many others were included also in this invitation, though perhaps few were so much desired by General Falkland.

Walrond Castle became, for once, on the return of the family, a scene of gaiety very unlike what had been witnessed in that quiet neighborhood for years.

Parties of sporting young men, scientific travellers, and tourists, were again admitted within the hospitable gate of Walrond Castle, nor ever left them without regret. There was matter of interest and of pleasure, both, at Walrond Castle, and its beautiful neighborhood. But winter came, and its inhabitants were once more left to the happy quiet of their own family, with the exception of him who was almost reckoned one of its number—Lord de Tracey, who returned to renew his hopes, and open the way for the avowal of them, and young Eric Hamilton, who still possessed, in the immediate neighborhood, a small portion of those estates from which he had been forced, through his imprudence, to part. Towards him, General Falkland had ever evinced the greatest indulgence, nor had he failed to discover the good qualities of this interesting though imprudent young man, nor to offer to him his kindest advice, and the entrance of his house as his home. Alas! had poor Eric earlier known to value so valuable a friend, he might have been spared the days of vain regret and heart-rendering sorrow which awaited him.

CHAPTER III.

"There's Lowrie, the Laird o' Drumellàr—
Gude day to ye, brute, he comes ben;
He brags an' he blows o' his sillar;
But wha will I hae' but Tom Glen."

BURNS.

WHILE we have been reviewing the past days of General Falkland, breakfast is over, and now some of the party are rising, and some of them are opening the doors of the conservatory, and forming nosegays of the sweet flowers which fill the sunny room with their fragrance. Susan is leaning pensively against the marble chimney piece, certainly not thinking how beautiful the outline of her figure shows in the mirror opposite, for her head droops upon her arm, and her eyes are cast upon the ground; but there is one who watches with her mingled feelings of admiration and of love heightened by the fear lest that heart, whose throbbings are unnoticed by any eyes but his, should never beat for him. Margaret has twined her white hands round her father's neck, and is in the attitude of eager solicitation, awaiting his reply to the soft but energetic tones of her voice; and seldom has that voice uttered to his ear the language of entreaty. Evelyn is turning over the leaves of the Naturalist's Journal; but there is a smile upon his eloquent though thoughtful countenance not excited by the contents of that charming volume. There is a melancholy in that smile, mingled with affectionate approval of the object of his mind's contemplation.

"Well, dear tormentor," said General Falkland to his Margaret, as he kissed her sunny brow, "you shall have your wish, if I can arrange matters justly, to the satisfaction of all parties; so away with that anxious look, which so ill becomes you."

"Thank you, thank you, dearest papa; you are the best, the kindest"—The words died away upon her lips as she flung her glossy ringlets off her eyes, and looked around for one whose absence ever threw a shade over her countenance. At this moment she wished particularly to speak with him on a subject near to her heart; but, ashamed of betraying her mortified surprise, she stooped to caress her favorite dog, and remained longer engaged in that amusement than the occasion seemed to warrant, while she listened to the General's demand of, "What has become of Eric Hamilton?" and Lord de Tracey's reply. "He had scarcely swallowed his coffee when he rose up, as if struck by some sudden and wonderful thought, and rushed out of the house: see! there he goes galloping on that unfortunate horse of his, which he will certainly kill some of these days. Elliott is reckoned a hard rider; but Hamilton beats him by twenty minutes to the hour, I should think, at least." General Falkland rose, and walked to the window. "He is a wild fellow," said he, "and is apt to take strange fancies. He is going towards Benlever; perhaps some business of his own: but he did not apprise me of it. No matter; we shall see him, I dare say, in the evening: and then, Evelyn, you may tease him about Miss Mac Call's attractions. Poor fellow! Sir Thomas has no son, and it were a good thing for him, could he marry her, and so regain his property." A gleam of joy passed over Evelyn's countenance.

"No, General!" replied he; "I will not venture to touch on that subject, although, perhaps, I might safely do so: for I think there is little in Miss Mac Call's charms to attract the taste of such a man as Hamilton."

"You had better not," rejoined Lord de Tracey, "except you reckon on a morning meeting on the ground yonder; sixty paces," continued he laughing, "myself *your* second, Marchmont: but where will Hamilton find one? I should be sorry for poor Miss

Mac Call; though her unbeaming blue eyes and ceaseless smile put me rather out of humor; for were she to become Eric Hamilton's wife, he would break her heart in a week."

"You are severe, my lord," said General Falkland, who scarcely gave him credit for the bitterness of feeling which dictated Lord de Tracey's words. Margaret's eyes flashed fire, and her cheek blushed to an unwonted glow. Evelyn dared not gaze upon it; but he saw the gentle Susan glide softly from the room and he feared lest Margaret should follow, as the rustling of her silk gown passed the spot where he was seated. But he was mistaken. Without seeming to have heard the previous conversation, she went up to her father, and requested his advice, as to the plans for the day. "Everything without looks so beautiful," said she, "it is a pity not to enjoy the fine weather." Yet, as she spoke, she felt but too sensibly that no pursuit could afford pleasure to her, in the absence of him who occupied the first place in her thoughts.

"What think you, love," said General Falkland, "of going up Gleniffar? Susan has proposed me a sketch of the ruin; and this is the first day I have seen for months, in which I think she might safely sit in the open air, without catching cold. I will drive one of you in the curricule, and, perhaps, you or she will ride, under the escort of the gentlemen?" Margaret approved, the gentlemen were delighted; and she was just leaving the room to join her sister, when the door opened, and the servant announced Sir Thomas Mac Call. "Deuced bore!" muttered Lord de Tracey; but so low, that no one heard it but Margaret, who disliked Lord de Tracey as much as her nature would admit, because he had ever a slighting word to say of him she loved. "I scarcely expected him this morning," said General Falkland, mildly; but the quick and sudden step of Sir Thomas was heard in the hall; and ere he had concluded, Sir Thomas was making his in-

elegant salutation to the General, waving one of his short arms, at the same time with a look of familiar condescension to Margaret, and slightly noticing the gentlemen, who returned his greeting with something scarcely like a welcome. "Hope I don't intrude, General," said he, laughing immoderately at his plagiarism. "Hope the ladies are well—see but one of them, as rosy and as blushing as my Sophy. Miss Susan is always pale—a little sickly, I am afraid. Eh! Miss Margaret! Ladies will complain sometimes; but I hope nothing serious."

"My sister is quite well, I thank you," said Margaret, scarcely endeavoring to repress the smile which played upon her countenance.

"Well! oh, I'm glad of that—well in health, I dare say; but a little love-sick, that's all—hope she may soon rally—there is life in a muscle yet—should not wonder to see her quite fat and sowsy, like my Sophy, some of these days. Eh! what say you, General?"

General Falkland bowed. "Miss Mac Call certainly appears to be in excellent health."

"She is, she is," rejoined the voluble Sir Thomas, "thank goodness, none of your affected, mealy-mouth'd lasses, like some of the present day; eats her porridge and milk, of a morning, like a good one." "Then I should think she was mealy-mouth'd," muttered Lord de Tracy. Sir Thomas did not hear him. "Walks fifteen miles a day, and don't disdain a glass of my toddy of an evening. That's a lass worth looking at—eh, General? that will be worth salt to her meat, and will get both, please the pigs."

General Falkland, with his wonted benevolence, humored the vulgar self-complacency of Sir Thomas Mac Call, and replied that he did not doubt Miss Sophia Mac Call scarcely required more than an ordinary share of worldly possessions, since nature had endowed her with so great a portion of personal attractions.

Ay, ay, General, very true, she may not need them now, and there may be some designing fellows who pretend to think so, in another way than you do yet: but I am up to them. Let them laugh that win; but let them keep a sharp look out on such as would regain the prize that they have lost. As I was turning the corner house on this side the village, I met that helter-skelter fellow, Eric Hamilton, galloping on the road which leads to my property, as if the devil were at his heels—I knew where he was going: but lest he should see me, I bolted into the public house and gave him the slip. I dare say he thinks to find Sophy at home, and that she will listen to all the soft things he will tell her: but he'll be mightily mistaken; for I sent her away to meet some friends we expect, and she will not be home till evening. So I'll let him have his ride for nothing."

"Mr. Hamilton did not apprise me whither he was going to day," replied the General; "but if such was the object of his early expedition, he can but be pitied for his disappointment."

"Pitied!" exclaimed Sir Thomas, his choler rising in fiery evidence on his already heated face. "Pitied! I would not pity such a fellow were he to be banished the country for ever: an ill-doing spendthrift, who has no more regard for people of property and condition than my stots."

"You had better not let Hamilton hear you speak so," interrupted Lord de Tracy, who now, contrary to his usual proceedings, provoked by the vulgar petulance of Sir Thomas Mac Call, stood on Hamilton's defence.

"I don't care who hears me," rejoined Sir Thomas. "He's a spendthrift—that all the world knows."

"But not an *ill doer*," rejoined Lord de Tracy, imitating, as if unconsciously, the broad Scottish accent of Sir Thomas, "and you are the last person who ought to reproach his imprudence, since you have been so much the gainer."

"The gainer!" exclaimed Sir Thomas. "The loser, you mean; for I paid more for those barren moors than they are worth; and as for the house, it was an ill-favored, old-fashioned, tumble-down concern as I ever set eyes on, till I spent above a thousand in repairing and re-building it, and twice that sum in furnishing it anew.

Poor Margaret sighed audibly; for, quick as the mind can glance over long years of mingled hope and fear, she thought of the happy days she had spent in early childhood beneath the roof of her companion. She remembered the hours for ever gone, when, with her sister, she had loved to watch the shadows of the venerable trees dancing on the tapestried walls of the room which they together occupied; of the dear old-fashioned furniture, and the family pictures which she loved as friends; and of the thousand recollections endeared by present regret. She had been at ——— since the greatest part of the estate had become the property (as Sir Thomas loved to call it) of the present possessor. But the venerable trees were levelled to the ground, a broad red gravel walk surrounded a large plat of grass, gaudy figured papers had replaced the tapestry; hunting prints were seen where the ancient family portraits once hung, save where a staring resemblance of Sir Thomas Mac Call, in the dress of the Provost of Pollockshaws, gave unwelcome remembrance of *his* being the proprietor. All this was brought to Margaret's memory as Sir Thomas continued to recount the large sums he had expended in the *improvement* of the place. Evelyn could not refrain from taking a transient glance at her, and keenly and bitterly did he feel the regret which he saw depicted in her countenance; yet so devoted was the nature of his affection, that he felt the next moment as if he could forego every best and dearest hope, if by the sacrifice he could secure her happiness. Not such were Lord de Tracey's feelings, as

Susan that moment re-entered the room. Although not destitute of kindness, Lord de Tracy's principles and conduct were formed on a different model than were those of Evelyn Marchmont; nor had he learned to surrender his own wishes to those of another, even where that other was the object of his warmest regard. In the present instance, he saw in Eric Hamilton a dangerous rival; nor did he scruple in determining to use every effort to supplant him, should he have already gained, as he feared, some ascendancy over the mind of Susan.

He deemed this moment a suitable one for the display of an amiableness of feeling, not at that moment quite genuine, since by doing so he might place himself in a favorable light in her eyes: he therefore prolonged the theme on which Sir Thomas loved to dwell, by taking Mr. Hamilton's part—pleading youth, inexperience, and bad companions, in extenuation of his imprudence; and concluded in a laughing manner, which obliged Sir Thomas to repress his rising ill-humor, by saying, that he could not but regret he was proprietor of——.

Sir Thomas was now fain to turn off the subject, and began to apologise for the state of his toilette to Miss Falkland. "You must just forgive me, Miss Falkland, for my boots being so dirty, but really the roads are in such a state, it is impossible for a man to ride clean. When I was Provost of Pollockshaws, which you know I was, three year ago, I made such rules and regulations for the cleaning and repairing of the roads, that it was like walking in a parlour to go out in that neighborhood: but you, Highlanders, have but little notion of these things, though I trust we shall soon see some improvement." This he added with an expression meant to be arch, but which resolved itself into impudence, as he looked up in the placid countenance of General Falkland, who patiently awaited the time when this vulgar ebullition should

cease, and he should regain his liberty. But General Falkland's hopes were soon disappointed; for, rising to ring the bell, Sir Thomas continued, "If you please, General, desire one of your idle fellows to bring me a pair of slippers, for I must be rid of these Wellingtons, or the damp will bring on the gout in my stomach." So saying, he sat down, and actually began, to the consternation of the ladies, and the evident disgust of Lord de Tracy and Mr. Marchmont, to draw off his boots in their presence. "Don't be shocked, ladies," said he, while the exertion redoubled the crimson of his cheeks. "Don't be shocked, pray: my stockings are clean; not that the mud would come off, or, if it did, that it would signify, as your carpet, I think, seems rather old (stopping to examine the pattern of the Turkey carpet), but it don't agree with me to sit with damp shoes on, and, at home, I always make Sophy pull off her shoes on the mat; because my carpets are all span new: so some people may know what to expect." As he finished the last sentence, the boot fell from his foot, and discovered a huge pair of broad misshapen feet, one of which he quietly placed on the chair where Lord de Tracy was seated. The latter immediately arose, and walked away in silent indignation; but Margaret, to whom the concluding speech had been addressed, reddened with disgust, as the revolting thought, that the familiarity which Sir Thomas had evinced towards her since she had first met him, was an indication of more marked favor towards herself, on his part, than her philosophy could brook, or than ever her mirthful disposition could help her to shake off.

"Now then," said Sir Thomas, as the servant brought in the shoes, "now then," thrusting his feet into them, "to business, General, as I was saying"——

"I will attend to you immediately," interrupted General Falkland, who felt that the patience of the rest of the party would be exhausted sooner than his own. "I

will attend to you directly ; but I know, Sir Thomas, your regard for the ladies is too great to allow of their hearing the discussion of county business, which must be uninteresting to them. They had just arranged a plan for the enjoyment of this fine day ; so, if you please, we will part with them for to-day, and discuss our business quietly in the library, where we shall be uninterrupted.

“Oh ! certainly, certainly,” said Sir Thomas, with ineffable condescension, as he rose to follow General Falkland to the library : then, waving his hand with the same grace with which he had entered, he passed through the door, which the latter held open for his exit.

“You will drive or ride, loves, as you like,” said General Falkland to his daughters, “and I may perhaps join you on your return.” The ladies agreed, on their united wish, to ride ; and accordingly a few moments saw them equipped, and Lord de Tracy and Mr. Marchmont laden with sketch books, pencils, &c., riding beside them in unfeigned enjoyment.

CHAPTER IV.


“ Vivre en soi, ce n'est rien ; il faut vivre en autrui
A qui puis-je être utile, agréable aujourd'hui ?
Voilà ce que chaque matin el faudroit se dire :
Et le soir, quand des cieux la clarté se retire,
Heureux à qui son cœur tout bas a répondue,
Ce jour qui va finir je ne l'ai pas perdu ;
Grace à mes soins, j'ai vu sur une face humaine
La trace d'un plaisir, du l'oubli d'une peine.”

WHEN Eric Hamilton heard from Margaret the history of his late tenant, Dugald Sinclair, of the fate which awaited him, the sorrow of his aged mother, and the wretchedness of the girl to whom he was affianced, a crowd of generous feelings, mingled with self-reproach, rushed across his mind; and he that instant resolved to devote his utmost endeavors to replace poor Dugald either in that farm from which Sir Thomas had ejected him, or in one which he hoped still to find vacant on the small portion of his once extensive lands which he could still call his own. Without, therefore, holding forth to Margaret so sanguine a hope as he privately entertained, he resolved immediately to enquire of Sir Thomas whether misconduct had been the cause of Dugald's dismissal; or, failing to obtain any information from him, to make inquiries as to the possibility of finding some employment for him on his own estate. The resolution was made with an unmixed feeling of benevolence, for his generous disposition ever prompted him to treat his inferiors with kindness, especially whenever he remembered their necessities. Alas! that the love of excitement, and the impetuosity of his temper, had hurried him on to deeds of imprudence, irremediable in their effects! Alas! that the honorable sentiments natural to him were unnurtured by a father's advice or a mother's care! Of both parents he had been deprived in early childhood; and till he returned

from scenes which had witnessed his fatal though short career of extravagance, he had forgotten that in General Falkland he might have sought and found a counsellor who never would have misled him.

As Eric Hamilton rode swiftly past the castle enclosures where Lord de Tracey had observed him, the prospect of the kind action he projected, the freshness of the soft spring air, added to the buoyancy which his favorite exercise lent to his spirits; and a flood of joy rushed across his mind at the thought that Susan would approve him, and gave redoubled zest to the eagerness with which he pursued his way. It was not then surprising that he should not have observed Sir Thomas's horse standing at the door of the little inn by which he passed so rapidly that he was soon on the road which led to ———, unmindful of the possibility that its present proprietor might be from home. The country was hilly, and the roads, as Sir Thomas had truly said, very bad; so that, as he had to ride fifteen miles, it was some time before he reached the house, so changed, that while awaiting the appearance of the servant to give him entrance, he could scarcely recognize his own possessions; and while he gazed at the red paint which plastered the stone walls, in imitation of brick, he felt almost glad that the house was so unlike what it had once been.—On inquiring whether Sir Thomas were at home, he was answered in the negative; but was told that Miss Mac Call was, and would be happy to see him.—He hesitated, for he dreaded lest he should be uselessly detained from the purport of his visit; but thinking that he might perhaps gain some intelligence from her respecting her father, he alighted, and followed the fantastically liveried servant to the dining room.

It is strange why vulgar people always prefer introducing their morning visitors to dining rooms rather than to any more commodious or habitable looking apartment. Mr. Hamilton at least thought so as he



entered a chamber seldom if ever gladdened by the light or air of heaven, lest the first should take something from the gaudy coloring of the kaleidoscope carpet,—if that indeed were possible, seeing this was only displayed in the small part uncovered by a green baize,—or lest the latter should convey from its atmosphere, the remaining fragrance of the previous night's *toddy*, or of the small ale on which Sir Thomas found it most healthful to dilute his substantial breakfast. The narrow, uneasy looking chairs, covered with green cotton, and placed in martial array around the walls, looking so little inviting to repose, that Mr. Hamilton ventured to draw up one of the blinds, and throwing open the window, to lean from it, awaiting the entrance of the fair young lady. His patience was considerably tried, for it required some time to take from her hair the paper coverings, which, like those of the chairs, were never removed except on particular occasions; and this was, perhaps, one of the reasons why Miss Mac Call had preferred awaiting the arrival of her Glasgow friends at home, that she might exhibit her curls in better order than she could have done, had she taken the *short* walk of fifteen miles, which her father had proposed, to meet them at the village inn. In truth, the trouble she had given herself since the moment she had seen from her window so handsome a young man dismount from his horse, had not been in vain. Young and pretty, fat and fair, Miss Mac Call was generally esteemed a beauty by those who do not “start where souls is wanting,” nor miss that nameless grace which refinement of mind can alone bestow on outward appearance. She was, however, a good-natured, well-meaning creature; and the tyrannic influence which her father had exercised over her, had tended greatly to subdue the demonstration of her natural petulance to which had succeeded an awkward bashfulness, almost painful to those who addressed her. Mr. Hamilton's polite manner re-assured

her; and he obtained, after a few questions, a satisfactory reply to his inquiries. He learnt that Sir Thomas was gone to Walrond Castle—that she happened to be aware of Dugald Sinclair's dismissal; not, as far as she knew, for any misconduct; but because one of her father's Glasgow friends, to whom he was partly indebted for having been Provost of Pollockshaws, was anxious for that farm from which Dugald and his mother had been ejected. It was not without sundry petitions, half whispered, that "Mr. Hamilton might not tell papa, that *she* had made him acquainted with these facts," while, blushing, she stood before him twisting a pair of new yellow gloves around her red chapped fingers, and putting her head suddenly forward to entreat discretion, then as suddenly withdrawing it, as if she had betrayed too much the pleasure she evidently experienced in this tête-à-tête. As soon as Mr. Hamilton could politely rid himself of her repeatedly urged solicitations, "to *taste* a little wine, or may be, some whiskey, with an infusion of juniper," which she recommended as being "papa's favorite morning dram,"—equally anxious to fulfil the purpose of his expedition, and be once more at Walrond Castle, he returned Miss Mac Call his sincere thanks for her intelligence, and, assuring her that Sir Thomas should remain unacquainted with the source from whence it was derived, he again mounted his horse, and was soon on his way to ——— village, where Dugald and his mother had hired lodgings, awaiting the summons to sail. While the quick step of his horse carried him speedily out of sight, Miss Mac Call again resumed the paper *envelopes* of her pretty flaxen hair, laid aside the new gloves, and sighed to think how much better looking *poor* Mr. Hamilton was, than the *rich* West India merchant Mr. Simson, who was expected that evening with his aunt and sisters at ———. Eric Hamilton slackened his pace as he came to the brow of a very steep hill which overlooked as fair a scene as eye had ever gazed on.

The long dark line of the sea which terminated the horizon, was relieved by numerous ships and boats spreading their bird-like sails to the gentle gale, and shining white or brightly red beneath the influence of a mid-day sun. Within the bay, on whose borders the little village of —— stretched irregularly in broken masses of lowly but picturesque buildings, several vessels were preparing for departure, and among them, pre-eminent in size, was the brig which was soon to sail for America. It could scarcely fail to excite a mournful interest in the mind of one formed to sympathise in the joys and sorrows of his fellow mortals, however lowly in station. Those possessed of real feeling, will ever be ready to give credit for it to others; and it is, perhaps, owing to that disposition of mind, that such persons are ever more alive to painful impressions, since sympathies are so much oftener claimed on sorrowful, than on joyous occasions. Perhaps, with a few exceptions, Mr. Hamilton contemplated a wider field of woe before him than the hundreds who were leaving their relations, their friends, and their native soil, for the chances of disappointment, losses, and sorrow, on a foreign shore.

There was an appearance of unusual bustle in the village of ——. Mr. Hamilton could discern the bright coloring of cloaks and plaids in congregated masses on the little quay, from which a number of boats were pushing off. It suddenly occurred to his mind, that the vessel might be on the point of sailing, and putting spurs to his horse, he soon found himself at the entrance of the village. Inquiring where Dugald Sinclair lodged, he was conducted by a little boy through a by lane to one of the meanest hovels in the place; the door, which faced the street, was closed, but he was led almost through a dirty pond, lying stagnant by its tumbling walls, round the gable end of the cottage to another opening to the sea shore, but the entrance to which was at that moment obstruct-

ed by a large wooden *kist* or chest bedaubed with red paint, and fastened by broad stripes of blue flannel. It was for the present secured by the person of an old woman habited in a large cloak, who was sitting upon it chewing tobacco: she arose from her seat at the sight of a young gentleman, and muttered some words in Gaelic, to which the boy who accompanied Mr. Hamilton replied in the same language.

"Och! och?" said she, lifting up her hands with wonder and astonishment—"Och! och! an' is it himsel' wha would gang before himsel! His Honor's glory! Wae's one that your honor wad come to seek her in such an unco' place, and the mustress nae at hame? She's jist gone over the way yonder to bid farewell to Mistress Caimbell afore she goes—an the young mon's in the planting yonder wi' his Mary—poor silly thing, she's grieving her heart out to part wi' him, but it's little wonder, he's a good cratur, and kind too—and it's ill token what may become of him in these foreign parts. But och! och! your honor's standing—will you no come in and rest you a wee?"

"If you please," replied Mr. Hamilton, "though I would as soon remain here," added he, as the volumes of smoke gave evidence that the atmosphere within could be anything but agreeable.

"Och! och! dear, come into the fire, and change your feet, dear; tho' waes me, the gude wife has no a pair of old shoes to put your bonny feet in. All's away, an' they a' be soon away too—waes me, for times are changed now." It was with some difficulty that Mr. Hamilton could make himself understood, for the degree of learning which old Nanny Mac Ingish possessed in the English language was scarcely adequate to enable her to comprehend the fluent speech of Mr. Hamilton. He, however, by degrees, elicited, by sundry questions, the intelligence that "the Swallow" was to sail that evening for Canada, that poor old Janet Sinclair and Dugald had all in readiness for im-

mediate departure, and were expected every moment to return for the few bundles, which were lying on the wretched pallet, and instantly repair to the vessel, as the captain had given positive orders, that every one should be on board by four o'clock that afternoon.

"It's na," added old Nanny, "that I fear for their well doing in 'Merica, for he is a gude industrious lad, and will work hard wherever he goes. And folks say that you can get your sugar there for naething, jist by gieing a whin taps to the trees; it rins out like rain, and it's just as goode as we can get frae Glasgow; but it's to think of the poor auld silly woman that's scarcely fit to put one foot afore another——" Here she was interrupted by the entrance of the old friend of whom she was speaking; the darkness of the hovel was increased by the tall figure of Janet Sinclair, which, wrapped in a large blue mantle, concealed all but one hand, which was waving up and down in the attitude of lamentation, as she slowly walked into the house, apparently unconscious of the presence of those about her.

Nanny was the first to speak. "Janet," she said, "do you no see the laird?"

Janet lifted her dim but tearless eyes; there was an expression of calm resignation in her old withered countenance, which could not fail to excite the sympathy of those who looked upon it; but as she recognized, in the manly form and expressive face of the young man who stood before her, the person of her late master, whose parents she had known and loved as her benefactors and friends, whom she had fondled on her knee in his infant days, and with whom she had many a time spent moments of pride and happiness to her, a flood of remembrance rushed over her heart, which she had fancied was grown callous, and overflowed from her eyes in warm tears, bringing relief to her; but deeply affecting the feeling heart of Mr. Hamilton. Perhaps one more affectedly sensitive

might have shrunk from the close embrace with which the poor old woman acknowledged the recognition; but Mr. Hamilton would not at that moment have added, for worlds, one pang to the wounds of the poor old honest heart which beat so warmly for him; and taking both her hands, he began to re-assure her—entreated her to compose herself, and listen to what he had to tell her, as he was in hopes he might be a messenger of comfort to them all. Oh, how his heart smote him at that moment, to think that had he spent his days as duty would have enjoined, he might have spared many a sorrow to his poor dependants.

Just as Janet had dropped her thin arms by her side, and was looking up in his face to hear him speak, her son entered. "Mother dear," said he, "haste ye and come away, the captain's down on the quay yonder, calling—the horn is sounding, and we must be gone." Then, as he spied Mr. Hamilton, he doffed his bonnet, and apologised for having spoken so loud: Mr. Hamilton gave him his hand.

"You must not leave us yet, Dugald; I am come to beg of you to give up your intention of going to America, and glad am I that I am not yet too late."

"What does your Honour mean?" said Dugald, stupified with astonishment, so that his mind could not take in the thought.

"I mean," said Mr. Hamilton, "that neither you nor your mother must sail in that ship. I cannot promise you as good a farm as that which you once held, but there is a small one in Glenfinna, which I think, I can grant to you; and in the mean time, here are a few pounds to pay the rent of a lodging, till I can secure for you a more permanent one."

"But, Sir—your Honour, the captain of yon vessel has most of our goods on board: I've paid our passage."

"Never mind all that, Dugald. See, there is one behind that thorn, who will not regret your change of mind," added he, moving to the door, and pointing

to poor Mary, who leant her head on her hand, crying bitterly. At that sight every objection seemed to vanish from Dugald's mind; and taking the proffered hand of Mr. Hamilton, he thanked him with such eloquence as his simple gratitude dictated, while a big tear coursed down his manly cheek; and, as he wiped it with his coat sleeve, he said,—

"Your Honour will no be the worse of an old mother's blessing and prayers; and I'll work for you, or fight for you, with these two hands, as long as I live."

"No thanks—no thanks to me," said Mr. Hamilton, as soon as he could free himself from the grasp of the old women, who crowded about him, kissing his hands, and alternately blessing his bonny face and bonnier heart in Gaelic, or in English, as the power of utterance in the former language failed.

"No thanks—no thanks to me; but know that it is to the young ladies at Walrond Castle that you are indebted for my becoming acquainted with your situation—to them that you owe all."

"Bless their sweet hearts," said the three voices, at once: "but oh!" ejaculated Nanny, "we maun tell the bairn yonder. Mary! Mary!" she screamed to the weeping lassie—"Dugald's no going! his Honour has paid for all!—ye'll be married now—no drawings back—all will be joy—joy! Come in, dear, and hear it!" She moved not, but Dugald flew to her; and through the white budding blossoms and green boughs of the hawthorn tree, Mr. Hamilton thought he saw his face draw nearer to Mary's, than ceremony would have suggested, to tell the glad tale; but the embrace was soon over, and again Dugald was holding his horse's head. Janet was carrying a chair to its side, that his Honor might mount cannily, and old Nanny was pouring into a broken glass, some of the contents of a whisky bottle, which she had quickly procured from beneath the bed.

Mr. Hamilton did not refuse it, but drinking health and prosperity to the now happy family, waited not to receive more benedictions, but rode quickly through the village, on his return to Walrond Castle. He stayed not to witness the partings of the crowd upon the quay, for his heart was too full to indulge further in the sympathies excited by such a sight; but as the gun fired a parting salute, ere the vessel, whose sails were set, weighed anchor, a throb of joy and honest exultation, mingled with a sincere desire for the welfare of those whose departure his benevolence could not prevent; and now, with a beating heart, he anticipated the reward of his exertions in favor of Dugald, in the smile which his beloved Susan would bestow. She, who entered so feelingly into the wants and wishes of others—she, who he knew had at heart an affectionate regard for him, though he dared not now claim a dearer interest there. Then he thought of Margaret's gratitude—of those kind words she was ever wont, in her simple earnestness, to pour forth, when her tenderness espied a gloom upon his brow; or when, as he thought, she wished to remove the effect of her sister's coldness. He loved *her* as a sister: perhaps more warmly; for there is something in the feeling which a confiding woman's affection imparts to man, more touching, when bestowed by one who claims no kindred, save that of the heart, which is more softening, more endearing, than even the love of a sister. Had Mr. Hamilton known Margaret's secret, he would have ceased so calmly to enjoy the effects of it, for he was too honorable, too high minded, to deceive any woman; far less one, whose peace of mind he so truly valued as hers. The passionate attachment to her sister, which wholly engrossed him, blinded him to all beside, while the fears and doubts which accompanied it, left him also in painful ignorance, that it was as fondly, as devotedly returned. One word would have saved him from misery; but,

while he beheld her, the ornament and grace of her house of luxury and comfort—while he knew himself to be stripped of every worldly advantage,—regarded by her father, though indulgently, still, in the light wherein his own imprudence had placed him, as altogether unworthy to claim the hand of his daughter,—he would not speak that word, although its suppression should break his heart. Besides, while Susan concealed so entirely every corresponding emotion, his pride would have withheld him from suing for an unwilling heart; for such he deemed hers to be. He knew not that the consciousness of a sister's happiness being placed in her possession, added increasing diligence to the care with which Susan guarded her own secret, and set a double watch over the betrayal of those feelings which her delicacy would have blushed to reveal unsought.

CHAPTER V.

"Dost thou not love, in the season of spring,
To twine thee a flowery wreath;
And to see the beautiful birch tree fling
Its shades on the grass beneath?
Its glossy leaf, and its silvery stem—
Oh! dost thou not love to look on them?"

MRS. HEMANS.

THE riding party proceeded from Walrond Castle, apparently in high spirits. It was difficult to decide which of the two beautiful sisters looked the more graceful and picturesque on horseback, with their long flowing habits and velvet caps. Perhaps, the elasticity of Margaret's movements showed to more advantage in that exercise, than the calm dignity of her sister's figure; and her long glossy ringlets, which fell in sunny showers around her face, were perhaps more becoming to that attire than the braiding of her sister's darker locks around her snowy forehead; but to Lord De Tracey, Susan appeared as she ever did—as the loveliest, the most graceful, the most perfectly bewitching of women: and since, in her anxiety to conceal, not only from others, but from herself, the secret of her love for Hamilton, she exerted herself, especially, on that morning, to converse as if her thoughts were not wholly occupied with another; he thought the charms of her mind and conversation far exceeding what he had ever seen before. When Margaret found herself alone with Evelyn, (for so it happened, that thus the party soon became divided,) she could no longer refrain, from the fulness of her heart, and the simplicity of her mind, to dilate on the subject which had so much occupied her that morning. Evelyn listened with unfeigned interest, while the eloquent expression of his companion's countenance, at each moment betraying the native kindness of her pure heart,

sent new pangs to his, though of so pleasing a nature, that he would not have exchanged those moments for the calmest and most undisturbed of a different kind. He afterwards reproached himself, for being so deeply engrossed by the varying beauties of her mind and person, that he scarcely felt as he should have done for the object which had called forth her sympathy. It was not till he knew that another, and that other his most dreaded rival, had won her warmest approbation by anticipating her kind intentions—that he had to contend with emotions foreign to his generous nature. The most noble-hearted little know of what varying elements human nature is composed, till they find the evil painfully realized within their own breasts; nor is it till then, that unfeigned charity can be exercised towards others, since it is only from a thorough appreciation of the power of temptation, and our proneness to yield to it, that we can learn to feel for, and to excuse, those who fall into error. How often did this transient sentiment of envy serve as a beacon to the watchful and circumspect Evelyn! From this subject, Margaret passed on to observe upon the character and manners of Sir Thomas Mac Call. So much benevolence was mingled with her playful exhibition of his outward absurdities, that Evelyn wondered at her forbearance, knowing how ill she could brook to see such a one in the situation which Hamilton had once occupied, and how painful every remembrance of the cause must be to her.

“You are not, perhaps, aware,” said Evelyn, “that I have been entrusted with what would be in another case a very hard task.”

“What is it?” eagerly inquired Margaret, her mind instantly reverting to the possibility of something which might be connected with Hamilton.

“I do not think,” replied Evelyn, with a smile, “that, did you suspect, in the least degree, the pur-
4*

port of my message, you would betray so much eagerness to know it."

"Oh!" said Margaret, "you are aware that curiosity is one of the chief attributes of my sex, and I cannot be entirely exempt from it."

"I might suppose *you*," said Evelyn, in a scarcely audible voice, "to be exempt from most human imperfections;" then, with more confidence, he added, "forgive my rallying you on anything connected with this subject,—it is one so revolting to my feelings, so preposterous, so absurd, that I scarcely know how to name it. Can you imagine that this man has the presumption to aspire to an honor, a happiness, the very prospect of which would inspire the best, the most attractive, with fear greater than" — "my own," he would have added, but Margaret interrupted him.

"And what can this be?" she said, hurriedly, for the unusual energy of Evelyn's manner awakened a suspicion which at that moment, made her forget the transient disgust she had experienced that morning, when Sir Thomas Mac Call had hinted the possibility of his condescending to make her the mistress of his home.

"Can you guess?" said Evelyn. "Impossible! My lips, then, must utter this man's presumptuous hopes. He asked me whether *the old gentleman*, as he dared to call your father, would give you as handsome a dowry as to your elder sister—and bade me to make every inquiry—'since,' he added, 'in that case I shall let the young lady herself very soon into the secret of my favorable intentions towards her; and I give you leave, Mr. Marchmont,' added he, 'to let her know what she may expect.' He presumed to continue his encomiums on your perfections; but I could scarcely bear to listen, nor was it till I heard him this morning dare to insult you by hinting his presumptuous intentions, that I could bring myself to name the subject; I wished to have spared you the disclosure; but since I could not, I hope you will not

be displeased with me for giving you this warning: it has been a greater trial to me than you can be aware of."

"Displeased with you!" said Margaret; "no: I think that were a bad reward for being the bearer of such tidings,"—and she burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. "But why so solemn, Evelyn? I scarcely knew what to expect, when I saw that grave look succeed to such unusual vehemence. If such an honor awaits me from the accomplished Sir Thomas, I shall have little to apprehend for his heart's sake—and perhaps less for my own. Do you think me sincere?" As she looked smilingly in Evelyn's face, his intense gaze of admiration, softened and subdued her playful manner. He scarcely knew how to reply, for a thrill of joy rushed through his heart, as he thought, for an instant, she had looked upon him for the first time with a bashfulness, which seemed to promise more than the next reflective moment allowed him to dwell upon. "I cannot doubt your sincerity at any time," said he, with assumed composure; "it might serve as a warning to others, less daring than Sir Thomas; but there may be other charms more fatal to the peace of those who would control their unruly hopes, than this sincerity. Would that I had never felt their influence!"

Confused—surprised—almost overwhelmed by the sudden conviction which reached Margaret's mind, at the conclusion of these words, that she was beloved by Evelyn, she scarcely knew what she said; but observing, that if they continued to ride so slowly, they should never reach Gleniffar in time for sketching, she called to her sister to follow her, and put her horse to a pace which precluded further conversation. There was something so estimable in Evelyn's character, so dignified, yet so endearing in his manner, that she felt it impossible to meet the expression of his attachment by assuming the same levity of manner with which she had received the announcement of Sir Thomas's

gracious intentions; but she wondered how it was possible that he should so long have continued an inmate of her father's house, in daily, and almost hourly, intercourse with her, without her having hitherto discovered anything in his manner, which marked the feeling he had now betrayed. Her thoughts reverted instantly to him whom she loved with all the enthusiasm of a first attachment; and though her nature was all kindness and tenderness, she almost overlooked the pain Evelyn was doomed to suffer from her indifference, in the ingrossing sentiment which bound her undivided heart to another. When again they slackened their pace, Susan and Lord de Tracey rode beside them; for, leaving the road, they proceeded up a steep bank. The path again descending, led them to a green flat on the borders of a sparkling burn, whose banks, enamelled with thyme and daisies; wild anemones, and violets, wafted a mingled perfume through the morning air, and called forth many exclamations of enjoyment and delight from the sisters. Their companions were so deeply engaged with their own meditations, that their minds seemed scarcely at liberty to enter with real pleasure in their admiration of nature's beauties. Susan did not lament the opportunity which brought them together again, for she was wearied of acting a part, and it was much to appear pleased with the compliments which Lord de Tracey contrived artfully to introduce in whatever subject their conversation turned. Accomplished in all the arts of flattery, his compliments seemed to escape him, as if unguardedly led into the utterance of feelings that could not be suppressed. Then, ere the mind had leisure to reflect on their meaning, he contrived to change the subject to one of general interest, on which he descanted with so much address, that Susan could not but admire the eloquence of his language, and the grace of his manner; but notwithstanding all this, there was to her an absence of that nameless

charm, without which, the highest attainments of mind seem to fail in their power to captivate the wayward heart of woman; and pre-occupied as hers already was, she would have preferred the ardent and reckless impetuosity which Hamilton every moment betrayed, to all Lord de Tracey's pleasing wiles, even though prudence and judgment condemned the former. When she had retired that morning from the breakfast room, she had to endure, alone, the workings of her sensitive heart, struggling between the impulses of tenderness and the more imperious call of duty, which bade her relinquish hopes that could only be fostered on the ruins of her beloved sister's happiness. She had seen the energy of Eric's manner, when engaged in conversation with Margaret, that morning; her sentiments towards him were no secrets to Susan, for that open-hearted sister knew not how to hide anything from her. She had remarked their mutual exchange of looks, and the private understanding which seemed to exist between them; she thought of the comparative coldness which Mr. Hamilton always evinced towards herself; and that which one less diffident might have deemed a favorable sign, she had construed into a decided proof of indifference. With this conviction she sought relief by making a firm resolution, that she would never intrude, by word or look, upon the happiness of her more favored sister—on the contrary, that she would use every effort to conciliate her father towards Eric Hamilton, and induce him one day to give his sanction to the accomplishment of their wishes. With this view she had determined to assume a more favorable manner towards those whose addresses were favored by her father. Hard task, indeed, for the young and the enthusiastic to heal the heart's wound by forcing themselves to endure the unwelcome attention of those they do not love. In the midst of poor Susan's bitterness of heart, a ray of sunshine seemed to rest upon her pure mind, as the consciousness of

kind and virtuous endeavors soothed the anguish she had long silently endured, beneath the trial of unrequited love. She could not bear for a moment to think that that joyous being who now gaily rode before her should ever lose the sparkling charm of youthful happiness, which it was her delight to witness and to promote: and she would not have drawn a tear from that eye, even were it to ensure her own happiness. No: Margaret's secret was more than safe when she entrusted it to that generous, self-denying sister; and she knew it well, though she knew not how much that sister endured in the concealment of her own. They rode quickly on; Margaret proposed a short race on the grass, and won it. The exhilaration of exercise brought an additional glow into her cheek, and she looked more brilliantly beautiful than ever. Evelyn almost forgot his woes while gazing on her. The sisters laughed and joked together; their companions joined; and Lord de Traçey appeared to more than usual advantage. Margaret was delighted with him, and thought he could not have been in earnest when he spoke slightly of Hamilton. Surely, thought she, amid the flush of hope and joy, which the smiling aspect of nature tended to excite—surely none who know him can overlook the excellence of his heart, the candour and generosity of his mind; his very faults seem more like virtues than the excellencies of others,—and then, so young—so handsome—so engaging! “Where do you think,” said she, in a low voice, “can Mr. Hamilton have gone so suddenly?” The question was so abruptly made, that Susan turned deadly pale; for, dreaming involuntarily at that moment of the very person named, she felt as if her thoughts had been discovered. But Margaret's eager look of inquiry changed not. “Have you really no suspicion?” said Susan, endeavoring to smile. “Is it possible that you did not anticipate some result from your conversation this morning?—Mr. Hamilton is not

wont to overlook a petition framed by so favored an applicant as yourself. Surely, dearest, you know whither he has gone, and on what errand."

"Is it possible?" replied Margaret; "but now you remind me—oh, dear!" said she, "I do think you are right—bless him, the dear, good, kind-hearted——"

"Miss Falkland!" cried Lord de Tracey, galloping up to them, "you are mistaking your road; you told me that path to the right was the one by which we were to follow to Gleniffar: if so, you have passed it."

"True," replied Susan, turning her horse's head,—and the sisters found themselves once more escorted by their respective lovers; though each had that to think of which rendered their company at that moment far from acceptable.

The scenery now became at every advancing step so striking, that it was impossible for those so much alive to the beauties of creation, and the feelings which they excite, to remain insensible to them. The pathway wound through thick masses of birch and hazel and ash trees, whose stems were entwined with ivy and various colored mosses, while the grass beneath them was enamelled with primroses, violets and other wild flowers, relieved by the tender green of the young fern leaves; here the morning sun had not yet penetrated, the dew still hung in silvery drops on every pencilled stem, and, at intervals, where the trees and underwood were less thickly congregated, spots of verdure seemed to invite the traveller to repose. There the eye might gaze untired on the distant scene, which stretched beyond the wood: rocky hills, covered with sheep or cattle, and here and there the picturesque forms of a herd watching them, or a shepherd's dog, whose bark sounded from afar, as a friendly cheering voice. At intervals, on the brow of the hills, a number of scattered huts lent animation and life to the wild scene; the wide expanse of azure sea beyond, mingling with the cloudless sky, or only broken by

the distant sail, terminated the vista, which the party frequently stopped to gaze at, while the sisters sometimes made a hasty sketch; but the horses would not patiently await such an employment, and they therefore proceeded as speedily as the difficulties of mountain roads would admit. They were now approaching the ruins of the old castle, which stood on an eminence, beneath whose rocky banks the burn widened, and over which several ash trees bent their graceful foliage, relieving the dark grey of the ruined building. The scene was eminently characteristic of the Scotch highlands, and well calculated for the pencil; and Susan, whose talent for that delightful art far surpassed that of most amateurs, and even of some artists, executed an exquisitely tasteful and feeling view, which called forth the unfeigned praises of her companions. Margaret was also engaged in the same undertaking; but Evelyn stationed himself by her, mended her pencils, and handed them to her; spoke so gently, so agreeably, without once reverting to the subject which had alarmed her in the morning, that she forgot the unpleasant sensations which they had caused. Her spirits rose to their usual lively tone, and tired of her sedentary occupation, she flung her sketch to the winds, and flew as lightly as they, up the banks, and into the deserted chambers of the castle, stopping only to gather some wild flowers, and weave them round her hat, or to search for agates, which were often gathered there by the peasant children. Evelyn failed not to possess himself of the neglected sketch; but, disdaining to intrude where he feared himself unwelcome, he seated himself by Susan and Lord de Tracey; at which arrangement, the former felt relieved, and the latter not particularly grateful.

The day wore on, and, after partaking of some refreshment at a neighboring cottage, Susan proposed returning homeward. "Oh, not so soon! surely not yet," exclaimed Lord de Tracy and Evelyn, at once: but Susan was determined.

"My father," said she, "promised to meet us on our return, and I would not, for any pleasure, be the occasion of keeping him out after the sun has set."

"Then the day has not been altogether unpleasant to Miss Falkland," said Lord de Tracey, in his most winning tone.

"Surely," said Susan, "no one can behold such a scene as this —"

"In such society," interrupted Lord de Tracey——

"Without," continued Susan, (as if unobserving his parenthesis,) "without enjoyment. I have been often here, but it always strikes me with some new beauty, for I see it under different aspects; and, as I pretend to be an artist, I am ever susceptible of new feelings for the same objects."

"And I," said Lord de Tracey, "see it for the first time; but it will ever appear to me under one aspect. The sunshine which your presence has imparted, is far brighter than that of this May-day, beautiful though it be. Memory will be my artist, and well does she know to fix her coloring on this heart, where one so lovely is enshrined." As he spoke, he led Susan to her horse, and ventured slightly to press her hand, as he assisted her to mount. Susan was silent, for she was grieved. No answering throb warmed her heart—no returning glance from her dark yet soft eye met the ardent gaze of her lover. She thanked him for his assistance, and gently drawing the reins into her hand, moved forward.

Evelyn awaited Margaret's command, and stood by her horse's head, to lend the same joyfully proffered aid to her: she was stooping to fasten her shoe; but, ere he had time to assist her mounting, she sprang forward, and was on her horse in a moment.

"You see," said she, "how independent I am!"

Evelyn looked reproachfully at her. "Happy they," said he, "who can truly say they are independent—perhaps not quite so happy they who make

others slaves. Surely, Miss Margaret is not one of those who would rejoice in the enthrallment of the unhappy"——

"No, Evelyn," said Margaret, with unwonted gravity; "no: that, indeed, is not in my nature."

It was long since Margaret had called him by his name: the habit which she had acquired in the intimacy of childhood had since been dropped for the more formal appellation, which advance of years and change of circumstances seemed to call for; but the fact of her doing so, at that moment, filled his heart with joy, and after a moment's silence, he exclaimed—

"Oh Margaret! dear Margaret! would that we could recal the days of our childhood, when all seemed bright and smiling before us; when you loved me—did you not?—as a brother; when there was no other companion in your walks and rides; when I assisted you to mount your pony, or to cross the burn, or to deck that hair with the flowers we had gathered together. Oh Margaret! would that I could recal those days forever gone!"

"Yes, Evelyn," rejoined Margaret, gravely, "they are indeed gone—and for ever. The years which intervened during your absence abroad, estranged us, in a manner, from that degree of intimacy, which it would not be suitable, now our childhood is passed, to resume. Let us be friends,—kind, warm friends,—that will not quarrel, even," concluded she, smiling, "even though, in the wildness of my spirits, I prefer mounting my horse without assistance." She reached her hand to Evelyn as she began; but, though she had thus playfully terminated the conversation, she feared, by the nervous pressure with which he grasped it, that poor Evelyn's ardor of feeling was by no means so easily repressed; and it was with difficulty that she contrived, during the remainder of their ride, to render the conversation general, and avoid such topics as might lead to the expression of sentiments which she

had unwittingly awakened, and which she thought herself incapable of returning.

"Hark!" said Susan, as they drew within a few miles of the Castle. "Hark! what is that gun?—the report is so loud, I should almost think it was that of a cannon."

"It is so in truth," replied Lord de Tracey: "and see, there is the smoke!—it proceeds from that large brig."

"From what?" eagerly inquired Margaret; "from the brig? Oh! see, her sails are set—she is about to leave the shore.—Oh! poor Dugald!—poor, poor Mary! It is then too late!" The thought struck her that she had been remiss in her exertions in their behalf, that an early application to her father might have saved these poor people from the misery that awaited them. The idea was so painful that she in vain strove to repress the tears that rose to her eyes. Susan observed her emotion, and, guessing the cause, was at her side in a moment, whispering words of consolation and encouragement. Evelyn, while he felt as much for her, dared not offer the kindness even of a brother.

As they quickened their pace, the hopes which Susan had suggested lent new strength to her sister; and just as they reached the entrance to the Castle inclosure, a horseman galloping at full speed met them. It was Eric Hamilton, and quickly did the sisters recognize him, all bright and beautiful, as he seemed; his glossy curls escaping from beneath the Highland bonnet he wore—his face flushed with a glow of health, and beaming with smiles, as he welcomed them.

"What news?" said Margaret eagerly.

"Good news! good news!" replied he: "good news to Miss Margaret! Dugald will not go abroad; and Mary will not, I think, make any objections to the new arrangements—for which they have to thank you."

"Oh! thank you, thank you!" said Margaret, stretching out her hand to him in simple undisguised

pleasure. A tear stole down the cheek of Susan, but it was unobserved.—Hamilton's countenance fell. "One word from her," thought he, "would have amply repaid me; but that word is withheld." He glanced at Lord de Tracey, and a pang of jealousy shot through his frame. They reached the Castle gate, and Margaret did not this time disdain assistance to dismount; she was soon on the steps which led to her father's room, and told him her tale of joy as correctly as haste and happiness would admit.

Susan had remained some paces behind her; and, in endeavoring to jump from her saddle, her habit became entangled; and, notwithstanding Lord de Tracey's assistance, she was on the point of falling forwards, when Mr. Hamilton sprang towards her and caught her in his arms. It was a moment of deep emotion to both,—but each heart beat secretly. Susan was confused.

"Thank you," said she, hastily; "two good deeds in one day are more than most can boast of performing." Eric's countenance beamed with joy.

"A thousand were too well repaid by Miss Falkland's approval;"—but Susan heard him not: overwhelmed with the dread of giving way to her own weakness, and acting treacherously towards her sister, she felt at that moment unequal even to meet her father, and rushed to her own apartment, where, burying her face in her hands, she thought of all that had passed that day, and once more resolved to conquer her ill-fated attachment.

CHAPTER VI.

"The more a man values himself, the less he is valued by others; and it is a thousand to one that his foolish vain humour of pride mingles some odd, fanciful, ridiculous, or unsavory ingredient in the actions or deportment of such men."

SIR MATTHEW HALE.

How long Susan remained in silent meditation she knew not; but she was first aroused from it by her sister, who entered hurriedly, having almost completed her toilette for dinner. "Susan! Susan! where are you? Make haste, dear Susan, or you will be too late for dinner. But I fear, love, you are very tired; or my foolish anxiety has annoyed you," said she, kissing her cheek kindly, "for your eyes look very heavy, and I know you feel anything that has vexed me long after I have forgotten it. Cheer up, love, and make yourself very smart, I entreat; you do not know why I ask it. Mr. Elliott, and his friend Mr. Richardson, have arrived, and old Mr. Lazenby, with his niece, Mrs. Stewart, also. Papa had quite forgotten to tell us that he expected them to-day. They had written to apprise him of their intention to favour us with a week's visit, and he laid the letter aside, and forgot all about it; so ever since Sir Thomas's departure, poor papa has had the benefit of their society all to himself. Mr. Lazenby has brought him on to his twenty-fourth chapter on pigs, and Mrs. Stewart has given him the entire history of her four sons, beginning at their birth, and carried forwards through the whole progress they have made, physically and mentally, ever since. My father seems to be quite worn out; and no wonder. I must go to his relief; and pray, dear, follow me as soon as possible." So saying, she hastened to complete her toilette, and Susan,

commencing hers, was soon ready to join the party in the drawing-room.

As she laid her hand on the door, it was arrested by Mr. Elliott's, who was about to enter at the same moment.

"If I do not mistake, Miss Falkland," said he, fixing his large grey eyes upon her, and the next moment, glancing at his own figure, which, he flattered himself, was that evening adorned with no ordinary degree of elegance. "How charmed I am to see you! How have you been these hundred years? Let me see—where did we last meet? Oh, yes,—at that horrid woman's, the Duchess of ——. Such *ennui*! not a soul there but oneself! What a delight, to see you once more comfortably!"

Mr. Elliott still held the hand of Susan during this tirade, and impeded the possibility of her progress farther, till she was obliged gently to hint that she had not yet made her curtsey to Mrs. Stewart. "How well your sister is looking!" said he, advancing his left arm to the door, which he threw open, and entered, still speaking close to the ear of Susan, as if on the most confidential footing. Not that he was in love with her, but he liked the *éclat* of appearing to be on an intimate footing with so distinguished a person. Lord de Tracey was standing near the door, and soon arrested his progress by calling out—"Elliott! is that really your high mightiness? I fancied you treading the classic shores of Greece, and waking the echoes of the Parthenon; instead of that, I hear your dulcet tones in these northern regions! How can you breathe in this frigid zone, and at this inclement season?"

Susan heard something, in reply, of July and August being the only bearable months in this climate; but she hastened to her father, who was reclining in his arm chair by the fire, amusing Margaret with an account of his conversation with Sir Thomas Mac Call. The rest of the party, except Mrs. Stewart, had gath-

ered in a cluster in the next room—she had not yet appeared.

“Well, Susan, my fairy queen, how are you?” said the General, kissing her forehead, as she leant forward to inquire how he had spent the day in their absence.

“I am a little tired, *entre nous* soit il dit, of my company, and I fear you are fatigued love with your long ride.”

Ere Susan had assured him that she was quite well, the door opened, and Mrs. Stewart’s double-soled leather shoes gave notice of her approach. She was dressed, or rather incased, in a very tight, scanty, dark brown silk gown, without attempt at ornament of any kind. Her features were regular, though hard, and her clear brown skin, without a semblance of color, would have appeared to somewhat better advantage, had it been shaded round her face by some curls, and her thin bony neck veiled by some lace or trimming: but she appeared to prefer simplicity in each department of her toilette, for her coarse black hair was closely cut around her forehead and neck, and scarcely appeared on her high brow: she would have been truly ugly, had not the regularity of her features in some measure redeemed the absence of taste which her general appearance conveyed. In a gruff low voice she hastily saluted Susan. “How do you do, my dear—my dear? I find you did not expect us: but I hope we shan’t be too much for you.”

She was really fond of the General and his daughters, and it would have been necessary for those who observed her manners, to be acquainted with this fact, as she generally spoke as if greatly out of humor.

Mr. Richardson next advanced—an odd looking little Irishman, with a large nose and prominent eyes, a bald head, and very red hands, which were peculiarly conspicuous from the fact of his wearing his sleeves always half-way up his arm. He shook hands with Susan till the roughness of his grasp made the blood

mantle in her pale cheek, and continued to rattle on upon the exquisite pleasure of seeing old friends, totally regardless whether he received an answer or not; in fact Susan found she had enough to do to act the part of listener to Mrs. Stewart's account of her second boy's proficiency in the Greek language—of Willy's taste for trigonometry, and Alexander's love for Algebra: then she gave a long and melancholy history of her eldest son's late sickness, and how often the tumour in his side had been lanced, till poor Susan began to feel not a little uncomfortable, and was greatly relieved by the announcement of dinner.

Lord de Tracey advanced to claim the arm of Susan, and whispered, that he could have wished her a better incentive to appetite than Mrs. Stewart's description. Margaret gave her arm to Mr. Lazenby, and a meaning smile to Mr. Hamilton as they passed him—as much as to say, “You see what I am doomed to!” Mr. Elliott was fain to proceed alone, and was suddenly attacked with a bad cough, as if to convince his friend Mr. Richardson that but for that accident it would have been his right to walk before Mr. Lazenby; in fact, his mind was somewhat divided whether to rejoice at the presence of Lord de Tracey, or not. He wished to show Richardson on what an intimate footing he was with him, but disliked the thought of there being one superior to himself in such a retired spot as Walrond.

Eric Hamilton was in high spirits, for he was next to Susan. Evelyn was on her other side, but silent and dejected. He could not forbear musing on the complete extinction to his dearest hopes, which he had read that morning in Margaret's words and looks. They had been kind indeed, but her self-possession had resolved all his previous fears into a despairing certainty.

“Pray,” said Mr. Elliott, arousing him from his reserve, “pray, Mr. Marchmont, will you be so obliging

as to change places with me? I am positively frozen here; and perhaps you will not feel the want of the fire so much as I do."

"Certainly," replied Evelyn, rising; "I did not observe that you were suffering so much."

"No," resumed Elliott, rubbing his hands, and winking his red eyes, "no one knows the extent of what I endure in this dreadful climate."

Margaret felt disgusted by the selfishness which seemed to actuate every movement of her new companion, and regretted the change. She well knew that Mr. Elliott's wish to change his place was not for the reason assigned; but that he might be placed by one of the ladies, since on them he could better play off the artillery of his fascinations; besides which, he wished that his friend Richardson should witness the success he enjoyed with the ladies. He was, however, in this instance, considerably disappointed; for Mr. Lazenby engrossed so much of Margaret's attention, that he could scarcely obtain one look or word of reply to the sublime ejaculations which he uttered from time to time, to display his superiority over the rest of the company: such as "monstrous bore!—egregious fool!—c'est trop fort!—cospetto di Bacco!" &c. &c.

These were chiefly elicited by the eloquence of old Mr. Lazenby, who was that day in his glory, finding Margaret a most patient listener.

"Pray, Miss Margaret," the latter began, while his soup still remained untouched before him, and the rest of the company had entered on the first course, "pray, have you not seen the last number of my Berkshire Zoologia? Amazing! I thought the General had received it a week ago; it contains the concluding part of my twenty-third chapter, and the opening of the twenty-fourth—perhaps the fullest and the most detailed, in that highly interesting work. General," continued he, in a louder tone, "did my servant neglect to send you my last number? I was more liberal to

you, than to any of my friends—twenty copies, General, hot-pressed, gilt edges,—eh!”

“I am ashamed not having sooner thanked you for them,” replied the General, “and the engravings are very beautifully executed.”

“Very beautiful,” resumed Mr. Lazenby, and again turned to Margaret. “Amazing! I inspected the designs myself, corrected the first impressions with my own hand. The artist was astonished. Amazing! He did not know my talent for drawing: but I have an amazingly accurate eye. You are, perhaps, not aware how exactly I can distinguish the smallest mistake in the shading—the least defect in the representation of color which can be described, you know, without the aid of a pallet. I was the first person who made that important discovery, and have circulated the hint among several of my artist friends. You are aware, Miss Margaret, that I am a great patron of the arts; and if you please, I will, to-morrow, point out to you the defects I observed in your sister’s view of Glenfinna Castle.”

“Thank you, Mr. Lazenby,” said Margaret, glad that the conversation should turn from the pig-sty; but she was not long delivered from it.

“You must read my twenty-fourth chapter. I make all my young men read my twenty-fourth chapter. It does not, perhaps, give so general a view of the state of this interesting animal in this country, as connected with foreign breeds, but it enters more into detail of that particular breed so much esteemed by all connoisseurs, and by none more than by myself. Amazing! the Duke and Duchess of M—— travelled upwards of three hundred miles last year to inspect my piggery; but I scarcely know what they will think when they renew their visit, which I expect they will do this autumn. There is not a gentleman in Great Britain can boast of such a collection—amazing!”

Margaret looked up, and her eyes met those of Eric Hamilton. He was laughing immoderately, which he

vainly attempted to conceal; but the endeavor was useless, for Mr. Lazenby was much too deeply engrossed by the satisfaction he enjoyed, by the consciousness of his superior talent, to perceive any difference of opinion in the countenance of others. But, thinking he discovered an expression of inquiry in Hamilton's smile, he whispered to Margaret in a confidential tone. "Do you think, my dear, that Mr. Hamilton would like a copy of my work? It is a pity, poor young man, that he has not at present any fixed residence for the cultivation of such tastes, but perhaps he might like to show his friends that he is in the possession of so beautiful a work: it will be completed next year, and I then shall present it to His Majesty—thirty-six chapters will, I think, comprise all that can be said; and I flatter myself few could say it better. Amazing!"

"Amazing fool!" groaned Mr. Elliott, adjusting his diamond studs, and casting a look of withering contempt on the speaker.

"My next work," resumed Mr. Lazenby—"my next work, Miss Margaret, shall be a practical treatise on my favorite theory—you have doubtless heard of it?"

"Yes—no—I beg pardon," said Margaret, those thoughts had wandered far away from pigs and theories from the moment Eric Hamilton's name was mentioned.

"Amazing! have I never told you my theory, my dear Miss Margaret? I must have been dreaming. It is simply this:—but the subject will stand much enlarging, and will admit of many interesting anecdotes to illuminate the truth of it. My theory is this—the result of repeated experience:—talent, my dear Miss—talent is invariably derived from the mother ——— temper—temperament, and personal appearance, from the father. Do you not agree—is it not so?—or have you failed to observe it? Youth, my dear lady, is often

unobservant; but the fact is undeniable. By the by—I forget—did you ever see *my* father?" Margaret could scarcely repress a smile, for Mr. Lazenby himself was past seventy. She however replied, as gravely as she could, in the negative.

"Ah! very true. Amazing! you never saw him—no; but," continued he, lifting his hands and eyes with most absurd energy of manner, and totally regardless of his untasted plate, which the servant at that moment removed, "what a face—what a figure! the face of an Adonis—the countenance of an Apollo—the stature and muscular strength of a Hercules!"

"What a degenerate son!" grumbled Mr. Elliot, glancing contemptuously at the diminutive figure of Mr. Lazenby, who, with his thickly powdered head, uplifted shoulders, and absurd expression of self-conceit, appeared at that moment, not unlike a French hairdresser, of the ancient régime.

"My mother—she was long in her grave before my father: the sword soon wore out the scabbard. She was not, indeed, eminent for her beauty; but for talent—for superiority of intellect—for correctness of judgment—for flights of fancy—amazing! she was, indeed, a *rara avis*——'We ne'er shall look upon her like again!'"

"Miss Margaret!" exclaimed Mr. Richardson, in a broad Irish accent,—“I'll drink wine with you!”—Margaret bowed.

"I have endeavored to instruct my unsophisticated friend, and cure him of his hyperborean habits," said Elliott, in a condescending tone, which it was impossible for others to overhear; though the voice sounded sufficiently loud to attract curiosity, which the speaker intended;—"but all in vain; so I have given it up as a hopeless task; and there is something amusing in his total ignorance of the common rules of society."

"What's that you're saying, Elliott? I dare say some comment on our wild Irish manners; but I don't

care—the heart of an Irishman, Miss, is where it should be. Command me in any way, and 'pon my word you will find me your willing servant.”

“I wish, then, very much, to hear some entertaining anecdotes of your peasantry, and you must have a rich store of them,” said Margaret, glad of an opportunity to turn the conversation from the egotism of her two companions.

Richardson needed but a hint, and, spite of the distance at which they were placed, and the necessity of speaking in no gentle tones, he continued to ply Margaret's ear with Limerick fairs—feeling for heads—shillelaghs, &c., till she began once more, to sigh for the conclusion of dinner, which would release her from bestowing her attention on what became so tiresome, and would hasten the moment when Eric Hamilton might again be near her.

Evelyn and Mr. Mac Farlane, the chaplain, had become apparently deeply engaged in conversation, unheard by the rest of the company, and the General was compelled to listen to Mrs. Stewart's interminable discussions. In fact, he and his daughter Margaret were the victims of the evening; the rest of the party were all happy in their different ways. Mr. Lazenby had obtained a good listener—Mr. Elliott the place, which, next to being near Susan, he most coveted. Mr. Richardson was delighted, for he was seldom, if ever, otherwise; and this evening, which admitted him in such society, appeared one of especial enjoyment. Lord de Tracey flattered himself that he was gaining ground in the good graces of Susan; and Eric Hamilton and she were silently and secretly satisfied with being near to one another, hearing one another's voices, and experiencing that thrill of nameless joy, which those only can estimate, who have loved as long, as truly, and as purely as they loved, and loved in secret. Poor Susan's joy was, indeed, embittered by the remembrance, that she must

relinquish it to another, and that other her beloved sister. Could she rob her of such happiness?

Eric Hamilton's enjoyment was, indeed, impaired by the dread that his affection might never be returned: but that evening, flushed by the consciousness of having merited and received her approbation,—elated by the irrepressible kindness of her manner,—impassioned by the superiority of her loveliness,—he felt, at that moment, as if it would be treason to interrupt his felicity by one distrusting or anxious thought of the future.

When the gentlemen appeared in the drawing-room, they found Mrs. Stewart endeavoring to listen to strains, which would have summoned them sooner, could the voice whose sweet tones saluted their ears, have reached the dining-room,—Margaret was singing, and accompanying herself on the harp. There is something in the tones of that instrument peculiarly inspiring when touched by a feeling hand, and accompanied with that most affecting of all instruments, a female voice; the high notes of Margaret's were at that moment enriched by the deep and mellow tones of her sister; they seemed to be the irrepressible expression which escaped as it were from the fulness of her heart. The gentlemen, by one consent, paused at the door, fearful to lose a note of such exquisite harmony. The General was the first to speak.

"Well sung, my bonny birds! There are more in the grove than you know of; so now, I fear, we shall lose the best song, except you can engage another songster with a stronger note," added he, taking Lord de Tracey by the hand, and leading him up to Susan, with his usual simplicity—"Susan, my queen, ask Lord de Tracey to join you. I am certain he *can* sing, for I overheard him the other morning, when he thought no one was by."

Lord de Tracey assured the ladies of his inability to comply with their request; but in obedience to

General Falkland's desire, the sisters again sung a duo; the company was unfeignedly delighted. Mr. Lazenby advanced.

"Pardon me, my dear young ladies, but I must criticise that last cadence. It was well executed, but too loud—too loud, I say, not by the voices, but by the instrument. I was at Lady F——'s concert, a short time ago; B—— and T—— were singing the favorite duo, "*Deh senti ah pieta.*" The rest of the company had failed to observe that the accompaniment was too loud, when I took occasion, after the clapping of hands had ceased, to remark it: at once every musician agreed with me; they sang it again, and kept the low pedal down; the effect was amazing—applause was re-doubled—and the duo encored. Will you, my dear ladies, try the experiment?" General Falkland rang for coffee during this tirade.

Mrs. Stewart whispered, in a low growling voice, that her uncle's judgment on every subject was astonishing.

Mr. Lazenby put his motion to the vote, as the ladies were fearful of an encore, and wondered not that it was carried by acclamation. The duo was repeated; and every one, except Mr. Elliott, agreed to make the vain old man happy, by assuring him that if possible, it was more perfect when sung according to his directions. Mr. Elliott retired in disgust, and seated himself in an arm chair, with a book, which, though turned up-side-down, seemed completely to engross his attention; till a famous shooting match was mentioned by Lord de Tracey, when he could no longer forbear, but, rising suddenly, declared by how many brace he had beat the Duke of —, while Richardson stared, and Mr. Lazenby exclaimed, "Amazing!"

In the meantime Evelyn had contrived to interest Margaret in showing her some views of Greece, which Mr. Elliott had brought with him, and Eric

Hamilton lingered by Susan, while she sang alternately Scotch and Irish ballads. He could not utter his delight, but Mr. Richardson, who had no reason for silence, continued his notes of approbation; not so melodiously, but far more loudly, than those by which he was enchanted.

General Falkland alternately conversed with Mr. Mac Farlane and Mr. Lazenby, and Mrs. Stewart was deeply engaged on a new work on education, so that she was unwillingly interrupted by Susan, when, at the usual hour for retiring, she advanced to inquire whether she felt prepared for the hour of rest?

"May I ask one moment's conversation to-morrow morning?" said Eric Hamilton, in a low voice to Margaret.

The blood rushed to her cheeks, and her heart beat to suffocation.

"When—where did you say?" said she, with ill-concealed embarrassment.

Mrs. Stewart perceived that her company was not wanted; and she began a long exhortation to Susan, on the necessity of holding her handkerchief to her mouth, when she went out into the hall, after singing in that warm room.

"In the conservatory, if you please, before the morning service," said Eric, smiling; for he was most anxious to banish from her mind any feeling of awkwardness which might arise from his proposition. "Shall Susan accompany me?" she asked. Eric looked disconcerted. "I fear," he replied, "your sister will scarcely feel sufficiently interested in what I have to say, to give herself that trouble; nor should I venture so far to bore you, as Elliott would say, but that you have shown me that unworthy instruments may be employed to effect your generous purposes."

"But I must bid you good night," said Margaret, "for, see, Susan is going." So saying, she scarcely stopped to touch his hand: but, with a light heart, full

of hope and joy, kissed her sister, bade good night to Mrs. Stewart, and in her happy dreams, saw Eric Hamilton beside her, with Dugald and Mary in their bridal attire, receiving the nuptial benediction.

The slumber of Susan was less profound, her dreams less happy; for in the last interview between Eric Hamilton and her sister, which she had not dared to do more than glance at, but which her imagination pictured in too bright a coloring for her heart's happiness, she had guessed enough to distrust those waking dreams of joy which her sense of duty and affection had not been sufficient that day totally to repress.

CHAPTER VII.

"O Delia, win my thoughts to thine;
That half the color of thy life is mine:
Yet, conscious of the dangerous charm,
Soon would I turn my steps away;
Nor oft provoke the lovely harm,
Nor lull my reason's watchful sway."

AKENSIDE.

It was nearly an hour before the usual time for meeting in the chapel, that Margaret was seen, from the garden which fronted the conservatory, by the early Mrs. Stewart, who was taking her constitutional walk, with no other companion than a Greek Lexicon, which she was diligently studying for the sake of her dear Willie. She, however, closed the book, when she perceived Margaret, and, intercepting her with a friendly, but most unwelcome grasp, invited her to take a healthful ramble before breakfast. Margaret pleaded the slightness of her shoes, and the absence of a bonnet.

"Very true, my dear—very true," said she, quieting at once all Margaret's fears; "it would be quite imprudent in you to venture out so thinly clad. That comes of the useless clothing young people wear now-a-days. Look, my dear, at these boots; they last me from morning till night—I never need to change them. And remark my stockings:" so saying, with masculine energy she drew up the border of her brown duffle pelisse, or rather riding coat, and displayed a thick muscular leg incased in a coarse blue worsted stocking, over which she had drawn a pair of double-soled India-rubber boots, further secured by brown garters, to correspond with the dress above. Her closely clipped hair was covered with a brown duffle cap encircled by a border of fur, which she had so effectually pulled on as almost to reach the bridge of her nose,

and only partially disclosed one eyelid, so that her black sparkling eyes produced a very droll effect. The contrast her figure made with the light airy form of the lovely girl who stood beside her, with long glossy ringlets playing over a neck, as white as ivory, was not lost on Evelyn, who from the window of his dressing-room beheld them; nor could he refrain from entertaining a painful anxiety, as he saw the retreating figure of his beloved Margaret return to the conservatory; while Mrs. Stewart again re-opened her *Lexicon*, and pursued her constitutional walk through the garden. When Margaret entered the appointed spot for her meeting with Eric Hamilton, she had not long to wait in suspense, ere he appeared, thanking her for her kindness, and, with a bright eye and gay smile, proceeded to enquire after her sister's health.

"I hope," continued he, "you will forgive my troubling you so far as to ask you to interest yourself yet more in our poor friends, since it is through your kindness that they have already been saved so much sorrow; but I wish to write to-day to my agent, to make some necessary arrangements, previous to Dugald's taking the farm I promised them, and you can assist me, by giving me some additional information concerning him and his family. Oh! my dear Miss Margaret," added he, taking her hand affectionately, "would that I had spent my life otherwise than I have done! I should not be reduced to this state of wretchedness, —a bitterness of heart which I feel I have deserved!"

Could vanity be attributed to the conscious girl, who, as she beheld before her the object of her heart's best affection, with moistened eye and trembling hand, which, in the fulness of his emotion for another, he convulsively grasped, felt, in the throbbings of her own bosom, a secret pleasure, mixed with affectionate sympathy?

In the sorrow he betrayed, she fancied all that was most gratifying to her secret hopes, and these lamen-

tations for misspent time and fortune, seemed the promptings of a heart that longed to devote itself to her. Could she be blamed by the most severe for warmly returning the pressure of his hand, and wishing, by her tenderness, to soothe his every sorrow, avert future evil, and, by her example and self-denial, wean him from every evil habit?

And was Eric Hamilton *wilfully* blind in reading nothing in her sympathy beyond the expression of a sister's kindness? His heart was too fully pre-occupied with one object, to discern what would have been apparent to an indifferent spectator; and when their conversation ended, and he had obtained from her the information and advice which he sought, he felt no self-reproach at heedlessly endangering her peace of mind;—he saw no bashfulness in her manner, as she gave him the sprig of myrtle from her bosom, nor had he any wish to deceive her, by placing it in his own.

It requires but a trifling object to distract the peace of an anxious mind; and poor Evelyn, who recognized the sprig he had seen Margaret gather while walking with Mrs. Stewart, well knew whose hand had bestowed it on his rival,—and once more he resolved to strive to overcome the hopeless passion which consumed him.

The breakfast party seemed as if no anxiety preyed upon *them*: the necessity which all felt of concealing their secret doubts and fears, induced them to exert themselves more than usual, to talk upon indifferent subjects; and so successful was the attempt, that, even Mr. Lazenby's eloquence, and Mr. Elliott's egotism, were absorbed in general conversation. The day became wet and cold, and the ladies could not venture out. In compliance with the entreaties of some of the gentlemen, that they might examine Miss Falkland's portfolio, most of the party repaired, after breakfast, to the sitting room, where Lord de Tracey contrived so successfully to draw out his friend Elliott, that all

were equally astonished and delighted at his powers of pleasing.

He had a peculiarly happy manner of relating anecdotes and describing scenes which he had visited ; and while he knew that those who listened to him must acknowledge his superiority, and that he needed not at every moment to convince them of it, his conversation proved equally instructive and amusing.

Lord de Tracey, seated by Susan, and looking over the drawing in which she was engaged, knew not the hours were passing; since each flew by unheeded in the enjoyment of the present. Eric Hamilton was less satisfied ; for, though he sat apart writing letters, his eye continually turned from his employment to gaze on Susan, whose proximity to her lover was by no means pleasing to him. Margaret was at work, and Evelyn reading, or attempting to read, by her. Mr. Richardson and Mrs. Stewart braved the rain, and were taking a friendly walk beneath their umbrella,—each agreeing, that exercise, with an agreeable companion, was the most pleasant thing in the world. General Falkland was engaged in his own room, with Mr. Mac Farlane.

As they all assembled for luncheon, the arrival of the post served for a time to arrest the conversation of those who received packets of letters and newspapers, which were soon spread over the table, the arrival of the post in the country is an event of importance to all.

Susan received no letters, and Mr. Elliott was evidently much disconcerted, on opening the only one put into his hand, to see at the head of it a large print of a cocked hat and the king's arms, which betrayed the nature of its contents to be a call on his purse. He quickly folded, and endeavored to conceal it, as if it had been of some importance. "No news," said he to Miss Falkland, "nothing going on in the political world,—stagnant and dull as ditch-water. Very

strange," continued he, rising, and going towards the window, as if he still expected that, in which he had been disappointed. "Very strange, that I should have no letters from ——"

"I trust none of your family are ill," said Susan.

"Oh no," resumed Mr. Elliott, returning towards her, having elicited the question which he wished, "Oh no, not at all; but I expected to hear from Lady F——, my particular friend: surely the letters must have miscarried—deuced irregular, these Highland posts are. By the by, Miss Falkland, I think you are not acquainted with Lady F——; sad pity—she would do even you a monstrous deal of good—pro-digious fine woman!"

"I am not sure," replied Susan, "that I am very ambitious of her particular acquaintance, notwithstanding your encomiums."

"And wherefore?" inquired Mr. Elliott, "ah! that is just the prejudice acquired by living so much in the country. Forgive me, my dear Miss Falkland; but you have shown a decidedly biassed mind, by the expression of that opinion. I must endeavor to remove it; though I must confess, that I was somewhat disposed to think as you do. Thank Heavens! I am now undeceived, and have been indebted for some of the pleasantest moments in my life to my intimate acquaintance with this highly gifted woman."

Susan scarcely heard this concluding sentence, for her eyes followed her valued friend Evelyn, who, after perusing a letter, hastily left the room, in evident emotion. Mr. Elliott did not see him; he was at that moment entirely engrossed with, what was to him, a far more interesting object—self.

"I must tell you, my dear Miss Falkland, how I first really discovered the worth of Lady F——. I knew her husband very well, and had often met her in the gay world, in which she is, as you know, one of the most *recherché*, the most admired, the most en-

vied, and consequently the most calumniated; but I then merely thought of her as of other women of fashion, who might have no mind which could sympathise with *mine*. It happened, however, that not having quite as much to do as usual, I thought I would give a day or two to Lord F——, whose moors are particularly good. It was late when I reached their château, for I never think of starting till the sun has warmed our chilly atmosphere for some hours; and that day, I travelled so late that it became cold again. The house was quite full of all sorts of people—ragamuffins and tigers withal—such as one cannot keep clear of in this country. The party were at dinner, before I had made my toilette; but a vacant place was left for me, by Lady F——. She eyed me from head to foot, as much as to say, “Are you like the rest of these savages?” and I seized that opportunity to express a hope, that dinner had not been delayed on my account: she smiled contemptuously, and I thought her as prodigious a bore as I had expected. So I turned to my next companion, who was a native—a simple country girl, delighted to be noticed; and who amused me with her unsophisticated astonishment, at all I looked, and all I said. I believe the poor girl flattered herself, by the time the desert came, that she had made a conquest; but——”

“Will you be so good as to help me,” said Susan, who began to be as tired of this long anecdote, as she was anxious to bring it to a conclusion.

“Oh, certainly,” said Mr. Elliott. “What a knife!——Well; but I return to my simpleton. I soon undeceived the poor thing; for I hold it wrong, and quite contrary to my principles, to break a country girl’s heart. (He had vainly used his endeavors, in that way, more than once.) So, perceiving a respectable looking doctor, who appeared to be more intelligent than some of the rest of the party then assembled, I talked to him, and gave him some of my

Turkish receipts, till his delight expressed itself so oppressively, that I quitted the table. Next morning, having breakfasted in my dressing-room, I found on going down stairs, that most of the men were already gone out to shoot. I strolled about, till I found myself in the lady's boudoir, and there I remained, tête-à-tête, for four hours, perfectly unconscious that so many had elapsed, so lively was her wit, so sparkling her imagination, so eloquent her descriptions; so perfect an insight into the workings of the human mind did she evince, that I positively told her, as I afterwards joined her in the garden, that I should wish every word she had uttered were written down, that I might not lose one syllable, though the effect she had produced, never could, nor never shall, 'pon my soul, be effaced from my mind. Since then we have been on the most intimate terms, and I need not say, how highly I value her friendship."

"My dear Susan," said General Falkland, "Sherbourne tells me, that we may expect him and Lady Sherbourne and his daughters, next Friday, on their way to town." Susan said nothing; but she looked at her father with an arch smile, not exactly conveying an expression of satisfaction at the news.

Margaret laughed immoderately. "This will, perhaps, amuse you more," said she, putting a letter into her sister's hands, sealed with an enormous quantity of green wax, on which was engraven a hand and ring, over which was inscribed, "Joys I double—sorrows I divide." The address was in a hand unknown to her; and the whole appearance of the letter was so extraordinary, that she paused to examine it. In one corner was written in small text, with many waves and flourishes, "*private*;" a little lower, the name of "Miss Margaret;" and, on the left hand side, four capital letters revealed more completely the reason of the secrecy enjoined at the top: R—S—V—P. The contents of this curious looking document fully corres-

ponded to the promise held forth on the outside. It was as follows :—

“ Dear Madam,

It is now some time since I have had occasion to observe your many excellent qualifications, which, united to a pleasing person, have made such inroads on my peace, that I feel my happiness incomplete, till I have, my dear Madam, made you the offer of my heart and hand. No man can feel more indifference, than myself, to those worldly advantages, which are the inducements of many, when they determine upon entering into the holy and happy estate of matrimony. I am aware that your fortune, my dear Madam, is very unequal to that which I have to offer; but such inequalities I can overlook, and you will, doubtless know how to appreciate the disinterested nature of my feelings, by such an irrefragable proof of my affection.

You will observe, that I have enjoined privacy on the outside of this letter, in order to spare you the agitation, which a suspicion of its contents on the part of your father and sister might bring on; and I particularly request silence on the subject of my intentions, till the time arrives, when I may subscribe myself, more entirely than at present,

Yours,

THOMAS MAC CALL.”

The supposed agitation having evaporated in an uncontrollable burst of laughter from Margaret, and lent somewhat more of severity to Susan's judgment, than she was wont to pass on any one, however deserving of ridicule or censure, General Falkland inquired the cause of Margaret's mirth, and her sister's invectives against ignorance and presumption. The injunctions to silence, therefore, which Sir Thomas had added in his postscript were disobeyed; and General Falkland

perused the letter which his daughter gave him, with somewhat of the same feelings which they expressed, more loudly than his benevolence and calmness of manner would permit him to do. He whispered to Margaret that he trusted she would send as polite a rejection to Sir Thomas's overtures as she could frame; while she replied, that at least this occurrence would prevent their being so often favored with those morning visits which formed no very agreeable interruption to their occupations.

"At least," my dear, resumed her father, "do not keep the poor man in suspense. I shall send a messenger to-day to —, as I have some business to settle with Sir Thomas, and he may also receive your sentence."

Margaret hastened to obey her father's commands; and the day having now become quite fine, the rest of the party separated to prepare for walking.

When she again entered the drawing-room, she found Evelyn alone. He started as she approached; for her footstep was so light, he was not aware of her presence till she stood before him.

"May I ask," said Margaret, with a kindness of manner which deeply affected him, "may I ask if you have received bad news? I almost feared so when you left us so suddenly; but I was so much amused with a very absurd letter I had before me, that I am ashamed to say I forgot every thing else."

Evelyn endeavored to repress his emotion; but tears were in his eyes, as he replied, with a faltering voice, "I have, indeed, received intelligence which has filled me with self-reproach, and shown me the omission of a duty which I must seek instantly to repair. Oh! how I lament the selfishness which has made me forget the wants and wishes of others, in the indulgence of my own gratification! It is but fair I should now be the sufferer!"

"What can you mean?" said Margaret; "you speak in riddles to me; but I am sure you wrongfully accuse yourself when you say you are selfish."

"And is it not so, Margaret, when I have lingered here these last two months, indulging in vain and presumptuous thoughts and wishes, which never can be realized, while my uncle—my father's only brother—the last of his race save myself, widowed and alone—neglected by me, and, I now learn, on a bed of sickness—perhaps of death—is it not selfish in me to have banished the remembrance of *such* a relation for the sake of dreams which I now awake to disappointment?"

"I do indeed regret," said Margaret, who felt sincerely for the emotion which the usually calm and placid Evelyn at that moment betrayed. She scarcely knew by what method to soothe him; for having become aware of his unhappiness, she was too much confused to find words of sober consolation with which to address him. Afraid to utter the kind ones which her nature suggested, lest he should mistake her, and construe her words too favorably to his hopes,—“I trust,” at length she spake, “that your uncle may not be so ill as the letter leads you to imagine; and when he is cheered and revived by your kind care and attendance, he will not remember that you have absented yourself so long from him: surely he could not expect that at your age you should devote yourself entirely to his sick couch.”

"At all events," said Evelyn, "I *ought* to have done so. But enough of that; I must not annoy you by farther expressions of my regret; I shall find my punishment in years of lonely sorrow, such as I trust you will never experience. I must leave you to-morrow, and perhaps may never again visit these dear scenes, where I have spent days of happiness such as may not again return for me. Blessings be on you, dear Margaret," added he, burying his face in his hands, while tears almost choked his utterance.

"May every fondest wish of your heart be realized! Mine will not break, if such be the result of what has occasioned me so much suffering. May the bliss which he enjoys, who has robbed me of every hope, lead him to all that is best and noblest in human thought and action! and may your path be bright and happy as my prayers implore!"

Margaret trembled from head to foot: she knew not her secret had been discovered; for, till that moment, Evelyn had appeared blind to that, which, in such an open nature as hers, could scarcely be concealed from so intimate a friend. But as he proceeded, with a warmth and vehemence unusual to him, to call down blessings on her and on Eric Hamilton, as if their happiness were, indeed, inseparably connected, she could not refrain from admiring the generosity and nobleness of mind of her early friend and companion. While she tacitly allowed the justice of his surmises, by thanking him warmly for his good wishes, she could not refrain her tears of sympathy for his affliction, though she uttered no words of consolation.

"Hear me, Margaret! When I am gone, should pain or sorrow ever visit you—which Heaven avert!—remember the companion of your infancy, the friend of your youth; remember that no one—no, Margaret, not even he whom I cannot name now—can sympathise more truly, or would devote himself more entirely to preserve you from any sorrow, to guard you from every misfortune. Should such a day ever frown upon you, think of me, I entreat you, and, trust me, I will fly to serve you, though it should be to the earth's utmost boundary. Yes, Margaret, these are not vain words; this heart beats with no sudden, no transient emotion; the love that years have fostered, pervades my very being, nor can be extinguished but with life itself."

Margaret extended her hand: he clasped it to his heart, and to his lips; then, rising suddenly, as if un-

able to trust his utterance farther, was leaving the room, when turning, once more, with a melancholy smile, he said: "Margaret! do you remember giving me, years ago, when you were yet a child, a small plant of jessamine? Perhaps you have forgotten it; but I planted it in the summer-house, near the burn, and have often gazed on its white blossoms, when you were slumbering. Will you nurture it for my sake? Will you not permit its removal from that spot? Will you, sometimes, wear a sprig of its blossoms in memory of one who is an exile from these dear scenes, for your sake!"—Margaret promised; and, leaning her brow against the marble of the chimney-piece, she beheld not the last agonized glance of poor Evelyn, as he rushed from her presence.

"Bless me!" said Mrs. Stewart, who entered abruptly in walking costume; "bless me, my dear girl, what are you about, musing here alone? We have been all through the wood, and round by the strath. We met your father and sister, and all the gentlemen. My uncle pointed out an excellent spot for the erection of a piggery, which will be a beautiful object from the windows; and the General has serious thoughts of following his advice. Why, my dear, were you not with us?"

"I had letters to write," said Margaret, glad that the afternoon was so far advanced, that the light was scarcely strong enough to betray the traces of emotion on her countenance. "I fear it is too late, now, to go out."

"Too late, my dear!" rejoined Mrs. Stewart, "to be sure it is; but how foolish, to write letters at such a time! I never allow my children to write a word till they have taken an hour's walk; and even their Greek lessons are deferred in the morning till they have had some exercise."

The steps of the rest of the party were heard advancing; and Margaret, excusing herself on the plea

of a head-ache, was retreating; but, ere she reached the staircase, Eric Hamilton was by her side: he held in his hand a nosegay, from which he drew some flowers, and begged her to accept of them. Poor Evelyn was almost forgotten, as she placed them carefully in water on the table; but when she recalled his words—his broken-hearted appearance—the generosity of his feelings—the excellence of his long-tried disposition, she again felt more deeply for his sorrow, than she could have imagined herself capable of doing for any but one.

The dinner party was assembled at table before she re-appeared, and she was a good deal confused by the inquiries which were generally made, as to the cause of her unusual lateness. Her father rallied her on her having suffered, by his command, to refuse so much that was delightful for his sake. Evelyn looked inquiringly; a thousand contending thoughts passed through his mind; but he remembered what Sir Thomas had told him concerning his intentions, and he guessed General Falkland's meaning. Margaret glanced at Hamilton, and could not help feeling disappointed at observing no curiosity depicted on his countenance. He was gazing fixedly on her sister, who seemed to be deeply engaged in conversation with Lord de Tracey. The nosegay he had given Margaret was in her bosom, but being mostly wild flowers, these early spring blossoms soon faded, and as she observed their decay, a sigh escaped her, not unremarked by Evelyn, who, pale and dejected, was placed opposite to her, and could not avoid taking many a lingering look on that dear countenance which he thought, he might soon see no more.

In reply to one of Mrs. Stewart's numerous questions, the General acquainted her with Evelyn's intended departure. "But," added he, "there is one comfort in his absence—we know that he will very soon return; at least in as far as aught of certainty per-

tains to human will ; for he is aware, I cannot long be happy without him, and the house is not itself when he is away."

Evelyn dared not trust himself to speak, or even to look towards Margaret, in whose cheek a crimson blush was rising, and an emotion so painful tightened her respiration, that her sister observed her distress, and wondered at the cause, for she had not then learnt the full *extent* of poor Evelyn's unhappiness; though she could not but be aware of his affection for Margaret. The evening passed gloomily. Mr. Lazenby, finding the ladies had become inattentive, contented himself with Mr. Mac Farlane as a listener, and the good man was forced to hear, for the hundredth time at least, the history of his Zoologia, an embryo work on his favorite theory. Mrs. Stewart contrived to lay violent hands on Mr. Elliott, whom she literally detained by holding his button-hole in spite of his impatience, while recording to him her family history, from the first of the Lazenby's, to the remotest branch of the Stewart family, down to the promising youths, whose mental and bodily estate she never neglected to speak of in the most detailed terms.

Susan played at *écarté* with her father, while Lord de Tracey looked on, and Eric Hamilton asked Margaret to sing. Her voice would scarcely obey her wishes; her heart was too full to give that expression which in happier hours sparkled in her songs of joy, or melted into a tenderness which was not once too powerfully excited to be expressed. Certain it is, that neither poets nor musicians can exhibit their highest powers under the immediate influence of intense feeling; the heart must have experienced the power of such moments; but the voice or the pen can describe them only when the excitement they produced has, in a measure, subsided. Hamilton wondered why she sang so unlike herself; but Evelyn, who guessed the cause, felt, more keenly than ever, the bitterness of

being forced to surrender that which he prized so highly, and he could scarcely master himself to bid her adieu, in the presence of so many indifferent spectators. "Come back very soon," said Susan, pressing his hand warmly in hers; you know we cannot do without you, and we shall never be able to make papa happy till you return: and remember to write to us very often."

While her sister spoke, Margaret silently pressed his hand, cold as marble, and glided to her own room, where she burst into tears, and thought far more of him than she had ever done at the very time she wished most to forget him.

Next morning the wheels of a carriage, at an unusually early hour, before the door, excited her attention: between sleeping and waking, she almost forget the cause of it; but just as she rose, and looked from the window, she saw Evelyn's carriage receding through the trees of the avenue,—her father still standing on the steps, as if to catch the last glimpse of his dear young friend, whose departure he so sincerely regretted.

CHAPTER VIII.

The heart dies many deaths, ere still'd for ever;
And when we say, that we must not remember,—
That only means, how vain is the endeavor
To bid our spirit from the lov'd ones sever!

IN a small bay by the sea, completely encircled on every side, save one with high jetting rocks, so as to give it the appearance of an inland lake, is situated the little village of ———. It is chiefly composed of very small butts, whose heather roofs age has tinted with varied-colored mosses; the rocks, which tower above this row of buildings, lining the little bay, are generally unadorned by tree or shrub, save where a solitary mountain ash, according to the season, spreads its feathery leaves, or white blossoms, or bright red berries, across the blue sky; to the right, the towering remains of an old monastery, partially covered with ivy, relieve the outline, and add an interest to the picturesque effect of the whole; a number of small boats, in which fishing-nets are suspended on poles, hung crossways from mast to mast, are moored near the jutting rocks around, and the bright coloring of the fisherman's clothing, or that of the plaided damsels who are occasionally seen flitting among the rocks, are reflected on the clear smooth water, which seldom receives more than a ripple from the breeze in that sheltered nook.

There is altogether an air of repose and tranquil happiness in this little spot, which even the great poverty of its inhabitants hardly seems to impair; the occupation of the men, depending on the season, leaves them often at leisure to stray by the water's edge with their children in their arms, or to assist in the household cares of their wives, while repairing their nets,

they hang them to dry on their resting places; here and there, in fine weather, some of them may be seen stretched at their door, with their dog beside them, pondering over the sacred page; for, in the Highlands, there are few of the poorest class of persons who cannot read, and few sounds are heard to echo among the rocks, save the occasional call of one fisherman to another, or the laugh of almost naked children, who are playing in happy groups on the sands, sailing their mimic boats in the shallow wave. From time to time the paddle of a steam boat, which, at stated intervals, inserts its monstrous machinery within the peaceful and retired bay, is announced by the water's swell, and the loud roaring of the evaporating steam, as it stops to land the passengers. Then the little quay is crowded by every idler in the village, repairing thither in the hopes of being entrusted with some of the passengers' luggage, to bear it to "the inn." This inn, without a rival, is a square white house, the only slated mansion in the village, which, with its pompous appellation, engraved in capital gilt letters above the door, becomes, on such days, the object of general wonder and admiration. True it is, that the hostelry seldom entertains more exalted personages than Low Country graziers, who are on their way to purchase Highland cattle, or native farmers returning from the Stirling or Downe markets; yet now and then visitors to Walrond Castle, of a superior rank, are seen entering Mr. Mac Ewen's inn. Then, what potent fumes of herring mingle with the smoke of singed mutton chops and greasy kail, while the unceasing libations of whisky, at the deal table of the lower parlor, ratify every bargain between the loud-toned drovers.

It was late in the afternoon when Evelyn reached this spot; and when General Falkland's servant entered to inquire whether he had any message to the castle, by the return of the horses, he felt as if, for the first time, he had really bade, for ever, adieu to those

dear scenes and dearer beings whom he had left. Mrs. Mac Ewen's dinner courted him in vain, and he sat musing, in melancholy abstraction, till an unusual bustle in the village attracted his notice, and he rose to ascertain from the window what could be cause of it. The stream of smoke from the funnel of a newly arrived steamer, soon resolved his doubts; and, scarcely knowing what he did, he remained listlessly watching the egress of old women laden with blue wooden chests, egg baskets, bundles and cloaks, who stopped, in picturesque groups, conversing with the more quiet villagers, who eagerly listened to the tales of wonder collected during their travels. At last the dandified figure of a middle-aged gentleman, covered with studs and chains, who supported on his arm a lady in fashionable attire, followed by two younger ones, was seen picking his way, with mincing steps, along the road leading to the inn, and as they approached, he at once recognised in these the persons of Lord and Lady Sherbourne, and their two daughters,—General Falkland's expected guests. What was to be done? The room in which he was dining was the only apartment in the house fit for what the host called genteel company; the bed-rooms were full of peat smoke, the fragrance of which did not confine itself to these, but was diffused through the whole interior atmosphere.

Evelyn was not long left to ruminate on possibilities, for the door opened, and the lass, twisting her apron in her hands, inquired whether the gentleman had any objection to the entrance of some gran' travellers, who, she said, had just arrived by the steam boat; "they are real fine looking folk," added she, "your honour need have no objection."

"Oh! certainly not," said Evelyn, and in a few moments Lord and Lady Sherbourne entered, and the Miss Sherbourne's were depositing their bonnets, reticules, and shawls on the horse-hair sofa, which was the chief ornament of Mr. Mac Ewen's saloon. Lord

Sherbourne was not long in recognising Mr. Marchmont; and, voluble as his language generally was, Evelyn thought he that day surpassed himself. The half-uttered words of salutation which Lady Sherbourne attempted, were totally drowned in the torrents of his eloquence, and Evelyn's courteous address to the young ladies shared the same fate.

Lord Sherbourne was a man somewhat beyond middle life, but whether through want of any hurtful excess of feeling, (as some suspected,) or through the exceeding care unceasingly bestowed on a natural handsome person, his form was still erect, and his brow unfurrowed, and his fine dark eyes beamed with undiminished lustre. It was supposed that the continual contemplation of his own merits had given to his complexion that smooth and unruffled appearance, which the restlessness of his nature would otherwise have impaired; for nature had bountifully endowed him with the requisites for personal activity: his limbs were strong, and his person well made—his health invariably good—his head was filled with a multitude of schemes, his mind, ever in a small bustle about nothing, and his heart set upon the good things of this world. He loved plotting and projecting for their sake, independent of ulterior views; and he had so many irons in the fire, so many castles in the air, that the frequent demolition of some of them but little affected his peace.

In early life he had persuaded Lady Sherbourne to become his wife, although there seemed but little in him to recommend so opposite a character to her preference, except contrast. This may, perhaps, in some cases, be an inducement to those who are too young, or too thoughtless, to give credit to another for different faults from those with which they are acquainted. Poor Lady Sherbourne's gentle, or rather passive nature, was not wholly proof against the worrying disposition of her ambitious worldly husband; but the pa-

tience with which she endured his ways, passed for approbation, and they were reckoned a very happy couple. Lord Sherbourne possessed talent sufficient to attract people of all kinds to his table: the fashionable, because they were sure of meeting many of their own class; the gay, because they liked to laugh at him; the serious, because he passed with them *au premier abord* for a man of deep thought and active benevolence; the learned, because, by dint of indefatigable locomotion, by walking, riding, driving, writing, &c., he had contrived to collect some information, and a large stock of rarities, in the literary way; indeed, his library was the resort of all the Bibliomaniacs of Europe. His never-failing fluency enabled him to make the most of the superficial knowledge he had picked up; so that he could make a better figure in an argumentative discussion than many an abler man; or, if he occasionally got out of his depth, he had a peculiar knack of extricating himself with a few broken sentences, which conveyed the impressions that he was only averse to make a parade of his learning. His claim to science, therefore, backed by dinners of sterling merit, insured him a very fair share of respect from his talented guests. His was not a character which could in the least assimilate with that of Evelyn, who felt it a relief, when Lord Sherbourne left the room to bustle about their arrangements for the night, to turn to the gentle Lady Sherbourne, who had seated herself patiently with her daughters' bags and bundles on the sofa, and merely requested he would poke the fire, as she felt very cold. The daughters partook, however, in some degree, of their father's loquacity, and would by no means permit so good-looking a young man to devote himself entirely to their mother. One asked him about the last new number of Miss Martineau's new work, and whether it were equal to the former ones; for she had learnt from her father to attempt a shade of blue. The oth-

er gave a somewhat tedious and minute detail of the whole circumstances of their passage from Glasgow, of the several odd inmates of the cabin, and the difficulty they had experienced in landing from the boat. The cultivated one then went on to inquire after Walrond Castle—what sort of place it was—whether it had a good library—and who was there?

This subject was more likely to interest Evelyn than any other: yet, to speak with those who had not a feeling in common with him, on the subject of those most dear to him, concerning whom there was a hallowed sentiment which he could not bear to be profaned, seemed treason to his heart's devotion: he therefore endeavored to school his looks, while he replied, with as much indifference as he could assume, and in short sentences, to the numerous interrogations with which his patience was assailed. Lord Sherbourne again appeared.

"Pray, Mr. Marchmont," said he, advancing on tip-toe, playing with his eye-glass with one hand, the other on his side, his shoulders elevated, and his head advanced, with a peculiarly absurd expression of affected simplicity—"Pray, Mr. Marchmont, can you inform me whether General Falkland expected us? My carriage cannot be landed, I find, till the tide is in; so that we shall have to put up here for the night, and I know not whether we can all be accommodated."

"My room is at your service," said Evelyn, "and, I doubt not, I can procure accommodation elsewhere. Mr. Mac Ewen's single pair of horses will drag your coach very slowly over those bad roads; so that, even were it landed, it would be too late for you to set off this evening. General Falkland did not expect you, I believe, till Friday, as your letter intimated."

"Ah, very true—very true, my dear Mr. Marchmont," said Lord Sherbourne, seizing Evelyn by the arm "pray how is the General? What a noble looking creature he is! What a flow of animated conversation! How superior his judgment!"

"He is, certainly, a fine-looking old man," said the eldest Miss Sherbourne.

"Old!" said her father, with a look and tone of ill-humour, which the next moment he strove to conceal. "My dear Anne, it is quite childish to call everybody old that is out of their teens. General Falkland is quite in the prime of life," continued he, for his plans had long been laid to persuade his simple friend, as he imagined General Falkland, to marry his eldest daughter, who had begun to approach that nervous period in a young lady's life, which we would on no account venture to name.

Miss Sherbourne was silenced, not only by the severe look of her father, whose anger she dreaded, but because her mind's eye, faithful to the direction this prudent parent had given it, glanced at the possibility of becoming mistress of Walrond Castle.

"And how are the young ladies?" continued Lord Sherbourne. "I wonder that my very excellent friend's usual good sense should have yielded such indulgence to their natural love of gaiety, by permitting them to appear in the great world at so unusually early an age."

"Dear me," said Lady Sherbourne, gently; "I believe the eldest is eighteen."

"Bless me," replied her spouse, impatiently, who began to fear that his worst foes were those of his own household. "Bless me, Lady Sherbourne; why, will you never hold your tongue? always speaking of what you know nothing about. I tell you they are children—positively children."

Evelyn sighed inwardly. "Would they were so still!" thought he; "no pain would mingle then with the duty which bids me leave her for ever."

His meditations thus wandering from those around him, the young ladies thought him as stupid as a good-looking young man can be; and Anne agreed that he was too young to be interesting. Lord Sherbourne

however, was highly satisfied with his abstraction, as it convinced him that his rudeness of manner to Lady Sherbourne had been unobserved, and afforded him an opportunity of studying his plan of operations, previous to his grand attack upon Walrond Castle and its master.

"Pray, Mr. Marchmont, does the General see much company now—are his spirits equal to such an exertion?"

"There are several visitors there at present," replied Evelyn; "and General Falkland will have a pleasant accession by your arrival."

"Oh! not at all," said Lord Sherbourne—"not at all; but I did not wish to pass so near without seeing my old friend."

The real fact, however, was, he had travelled two days' journey out of his way for the sole purpose of forwarding his schemes to the General, with regard to his eldest daughter, on which he had set his heart from the time of his son's death; and the desire had increased since his last failure with a rich Baronet, who slightly fancied Miss Sherbourne, and might have married her, but for a long and detailed interrogatory letter, which Lord Sherbourne, in his wisdom, penned to a particular friend of his, strictly enjoining secrecy, at the conclusion, from the unsuspecting Baronet; the disobedience of which injunction spared the latter from falling into the snare.

Such a suspicion crossed Evelyn's mind, though he wished not to encourage it; and Lord Sherbourne continued: "Pray, will you be so kind as to mention those who are at Walrond Castle; one likes to be *au fait* of those one is to meet; and my daughters are so foolishly shy, they are easily confused in the presence of strangers." Evelyn named the party: he hesitated as he mentioned Mr. Hamilton. Lord Sherbourne's attention was roused by the name of Lord de Tracey; and, as his imagination travelled fast, he already, in prospective, saw the coronet on Maria's brow.

Miss Maria, in a tone of well-assumed compassion, said,—“Oh! Mr. Hamilton! that is the poor young man who ruined himself by play. I heard it said last season, in town, that Miss Margaret Falkland was to be married to him; but I suppose, of course, that is not true—is it, Mr. Marchmont?”

Evelyn knew not how to reply. He expressed his ignorance on that subject with some difficulty; but Lord Sherbourne's volubility soon relieved him from his confusion; and, as soon as he could withdraw himself from a society which wearied and annoyed him, he retired, under pretence of having letters to write. Long, however, after the clock on the staircase had struck twelve, he heard the indefatigable voice of Lord Sherbourne, keeping his poor wife awake, as well as himself; and he had little time or inclination for repose ere he was summoned by the horn on the quay, which gave the usual note of preparation to enter the steam boat, which was to return that day to ~~London~~, from whence he was to proceed by land to his uncle's house.

Next day, he found himself at the gates of the park, and with a beating heart, he awaited the appearance of the porter, of whom he made eager inquiries regarding Lord Ormiston's health. His anticipations had been so gloomy, that the answer he received somewhat relieved his heart. “Thank God! I have not come too late,” he mentally ejaculated, throwing himself back in the carriage, as it drove up the long dark avenue which led to the house. There was an air of gloom about the place, which not even the bright season of spring could dissipate; it happened to be one of those dull grey days so frequent in autumn, but which rarely occur in this season of life and vegetation. Evelyn felt its influence, but did not regret it at that time; the depression of his spirits rather found relief in outward gloom, and the glare

of sunshine would have presented too great a contrast to the tone of his feelings.

Ormiston Hall was a large building, in the Gothic style; the heavy stone buttresses, by casting deep shadows before the windows, produced a sombre effect, only relieved by the evergreens and roses which twined their shining leaves and gaudy blossoms round the high arched windows. In days gone by, when mirth and gladness reigned there, when lights gleaming from every window promised to the approaching visiter scenes of social happiness or gaiety within, Ormiston Hall was regarded as one of the most delightful seats in the neighborhood; wide stone terraces, enriched with shrubs and green-house plants, stretched down a sloping bank from the eminence on which the house stood, to the banks of a sparkling stream, whose frequent murmur was soothing to the ear of those to whom custom had endeared the sound. From these terraces, the eye might gaze with pleasure on the fair expanse of field and forest, terminated by a ridge of hills to the west, and the ocean's long line of blue on the east: thick masses of timber concealed the distance on the opposite side of the mansion, and formed a beautiful back-ground to the grey coloring of which the building was composed.

Evelyn was considerably relieved by finding his uncle so much better than he had hoped. His welcome was as warm as ever; and it was gratifying to the amiable disposition of Evelyn to witness the general rejoicing which his arrival occasioned throughout his uncle's household. Many of the servants had been his father's; and all who knew the worth and excellence of the son, hailed his arrival as a day of jubilee.

Evelyn felt ashamed of the despairing sorrow which had almost overwhelmed him since his parting with Margaret. He looked around on the many blessings and comforts which Providence had bestowed on him, and not the least among these did he consider the bless-

ed privilege of affording consolation, or even happiness, to others. He resolved to devote his life to this pursuit, and endeavor to forget the disappointment which had blighted his early hopes. A thrill of honest joy seemed to give new strength to his mind and body, and that evening, long after the usual hour for Lord Ormiston's retiring to rest, Evelyn sat by his couch alternately entertaining him with serious conversation, and with lively sallies, of which he would scarcely have thought himself capable before. When he lay down to rest, fatigued with his journey, and with the mental exertion he had made, a sense of calm satisfaction, arising out of the fulfilment of duty, superseded even his regrets. Was it that lingering hope still dwelt within his breast? Who can trace all the workings of the human heart? But be that as it might, gratitude and virtuous intention guarded his conscience and sanctified his feelings.

CHAPTER IX.

"By day, by night, in weal or wo,
That heart, no longer free,
Must bear the love it cannot show,
And silent ache for thee."

BYRON.

It was not with equal serenity of mind that Evelyn first awoke in Ormiston Hall. Those who have known what it is to open their eyes, for the first time, in the absence of all excitement, (which, while travelling, had scarcely subsided in Evelyn's mind,) after a severe trial, or the disappointment of the heart's dearest hopes, can know how he felt in awaking to recollection,—in recalling those happy hours at Walrond Castle, when, whatever else might occur, he knew he should meet the smile which threw a radiance over every object around him,—when he was certain of hearing that voice, sweeter to him than music's most delicious tones, and which never had breathed one word of wilful unkindness to any living ear. Dull and dreary was now the murmuring sound of that stream which flowed beneath Ormiston Hall, and which was only varied by the cawing of the rooks who built their nests in the large pine trees, whose branches spread around in melancholy grandeur. He looked from his window, and saw the young blossoms of the Ghean trees* just bursting into beauty amid the fresh green leaves; every tree and shrub betokening the "*soote season*;" the morning shone with bright promise of a golden day, such as he had loved *when she* he loved was by his side. For her sake he had prized each opening flower; her gentle nature, he knew, was formed to taste the full enjoyment of such innocent delights; and with her he had experienced that most blissful of

* A species of wild cherry.

all sensations, the silent consciousness of perfect sympathy, while in every lovely and inspiring object in nature he recognised and adored the great Being who had called them into existence. Alas! these days were gone—from him,—and gone for ever! Duty, honor, friendship, forbade it; and Evelyn's generous nature felt this keenly; for, aware of General Falkland's affection and regard for him, he could not but be sensible that his influence would all be exerted in his favor: and how could he bear to make use of the General's regard, to the disappointment of him whom she loved? No: rather would he relinquish his dearest wishes, than see her tried by the expression of a father's displeasure, or be compelled, in compliance with a father's wish, to feign a preference which affection had failed to excite. But Evelyn was not wont to endure the pangs of nature's regrets unassisted and alone; it was with no cold formality that he daily offered thanksgivings for his creation, as well as for all the blessings of life; and while he saw all nature engaged in one general hymn of praise, he joined his voice with a fervent heart, seeking the promised aid of strength to meet his trials, with an earnestness which never pleads in vain, and never leaves the suppliant despairing.

He had not been long dressed, when his uncle sent for him; and glad did he feel when those dear withered hands clasped his so affectionately, while, with almost childish simplicity, he thanked him for having returned to him, and assured him that even dear Caroline's care had not been half so soothing to him as his would be. "And who is Caroline," inquired Evelyn, "who has taken the place which I ought never to have suffered to be vacant?"

"Do not say so," my dear boy; "I have missed you, it is true; but I never would allow Gilpin to send you word that I was ill, till I feared, one night, I was dying; and then I wished once more to obtain a sight of my dear boy."

Evelyn pressed his hand with a warmth which could not vent itself in words, and a tear stole from his full heart to his eye.

His uncle continued—

“Do you not remember the daughter of my old college companion, Somerville, with whom I have always kept up a friendly intercourse? His daughter, Caroline, was in bad health last year; and, being recommended change of air and scene, her father was induced to bring her to the Highlands; she rallied so much that he yielded to my persuasions, and agreed to occupy, for a short time, the pretty house in the Glen, which had been vacant since the death of my cousin Martha. The society of my old friend has been a great solace to me, and Caroline seems so much benefited by our bracing air, that I trust she may soon quite regain her strength. Poor child; I fear she has forgot herself in her attentions to me, latterly; but her father does not think so, for he has agreed to leave her under my care, when he returns to his vicarage,—which, I fear, he will soon be obliged to do. Now, my dear boy, I have been indulging myself in forming plans for you: you must see and admire my young favorite, and then, I hope, you will be at no loss to guess what they are: she cannot fail to please you; you must love her—and to see it will shed a brightness on my last days.”

Evelyn sighed.

“Ah, Evelyn, my dear,” said his uncle, with an inquiring look—“why that sigh?”

The question was not made in a tone of common anxiety; the interrogator did not seek carelessly to lift the veil from a heart whose happiness he prized beyond his own, but with sincere and heartfelt concern, and with a tenderness more like that of woman, his uncle gazed on Evelyn's downcast countenance, while he, at that moment, in the fulness of his heart, felt that he could not withhold his secret from one to whom his happiness seemed his first object.

Lord Ormiston heard his confession with silent regret and deep sympathy; and when Evelyn's few hurried and dejected sentences were uttered, he gently said, "How beautiful her mother was when General Falkland first returned from India! Well do I remember her looks of ineffable sweetness, and the more than earthly love that beamed in her soft expressive eye. I have not seen her daughters since they were children, but I can imagine how charming they must be, from the promise their early beauties gave; and she, who is your heart's treasure, I thought the loveliest, the most endearing, as I held her on my knee, and marked the cherub smile which played around her bright lips, and the laughing lustre of her large blue eye. It cannot be, my dear boy, that she should prefer that wild and reckless Hamilton to you. Surely your anxiety has blinded you, and you will yet see your hopes fulfilled."

How Evelyn loved his uncle for these words! but he would not seem to believe them. He shook his head mournfully. "No," said he, "I dare not think so; but let me not harass you more with this painful subject. I will endeavor to forget all save the wish for her happiness."

The hours passed cheerily to Lord Ormiston, while Evelyn sat by his couch, which was placed near the window, opening on the sunny terrace, that he might enjoy the sweet calm air laden with the fragrance of violets, and other early plants of spring, emitted their sweets with the exotics which bloomed near. Mr. Somerville and his daughter were expected to dinner, and Evelyn was not sorry to think that his uncle should be cheered by other society than his own, for he felt almost unequal to the continued exertion of concealing from his uncle's anxious and affectionate eye the weight which hung upon his spirits.

When Evelyn entered the drawing-room before dinner, he found the guests already arrived. He recog-

nised in Mr. Somerville, one whose benign expression of countenance and amiable manners recalled to his mind an acquaintance he had formed some years previous, and which he felt it a satisfaction to renew. The dim twilight partially disclosed the slight but tall figure of an elegant looking girl—brought to his heart, for a moment, a quicker pulsation—but the next moment realized the consciousness of disappointment; and, like one awaking from a dream of bliss, he calmly returned her salutation. Lord Ormiston introduced him to Miss Somerville. His eye might have gazed on brighter beauty, his heart might have beat for one of more enthusiastic temperament, more sparkling genius and more refined grace, but none could look on one of more feminine loveliness than Caroline's; no sweeter disposition or more tender heart existed, than that of this daughter of a country clergyman; who, brought up under the constant superintendence of so excellent and pious a man, retired from scenes of worldly temptation, and devoting her happy life to the care of her father's poor parishioners, had scarcely learnt one lesson from the world's cold philosophy, to chill the native warmth of her heart, and knew as little of evil as is in the nature of frail humanity. She was innately timid, and, never having enjoyed a mother's or a sister's society, had learnt to repress the expression of her thoughts, so that she was usually silent, save when alone with her father, whom she loved with the most devoted affection, and whose otherwise lonely life was cheered by her constant and tender attentions. His soul had been filled with anguish, such as an anxious father only can feel, on beholding the insidious approaches of a disorder, whose effects, though betrayed only by the increasing delicacy and the ethereal appearance of her form and countenance, could not deceive the anxious and apprehensive eyes of parental love.

“Even Evelyn remarked, with commiseration, the hectic flush on her cheek, the azure tint of the veins which shone transparent through her calm and serene brow, and the delicate drooping bend of a figure, which seemed scarcely able to support its slight weight.

The reverence which Caroline felt for her father was heightened by the respect with which Lord Ormiston attended to him; for, though better versed in the wisdom of this world than Mr. Somerville, the heart of Lord Ormiston was chastened to a child-like simplicity, by the effects of years of trial and suffering, and there was a mildness in his manner, derived from this true humility, which lent an additional charm to the natural grace and superiority of his address. Every amiable characteristic of Evelyn’s disposition was elicited by the tone of conversation which prevailed between these friends, and Caroline listened to them with an admiration, which threw the glow of pleasure over her sweet countenance.

“How different,” thought Evelyn, “this amiable young creature from the Miss Sherbournes! He had felt it a heavy task, spending even a few moments in their society, after parting with Margaret; Caroline Somerville’s soft loveliness and serene disposition, on the contrary, were soothing to him; nor did he feel a suspicion of heart’s treason to his beloved, while reviving to pleasure under her gentle influence. Days passed, and still the same party met every evening; and sometimes, while Caroline accompanied Lord Ormiston on his morning drive, Evelyn rode with her father, and enjoyed a communion of thought from which his own mind acquired new vigor. Mr. Somerville, ever mindful of his high office, sought not to veil the calm and steady light which illumined his understanding and cheered his heart; and though never intrusive with his counsels or his opinions, he seldom failed to throw on every object the gilding of his own

holy and enlivening faith, "touching all things with hues of heaven." Sometimes Evelyn walked on the flowery terraces with Miss Somerville, who, perhaps, found more pleasure in such society than in the long drives, even with her dear Lord Ormiston: yet he was often the theme of their conversation, and Evelyn could not but admire the respect, mingled with tenderness, which she evinced for his aged relation: he felt gratitude for that kindness which, in his absence, had softened the gloom of his suffering hours, and cheered his solitude.

Was a softer sentiment than that of gratitude then taking root in the young heart of Caroline, ere she was herself aware of it? Why did she so long for the time when her father's summons called her to accompany him to Ormiston Hall? Why did she feel the hours hang heavy, that before were so pleasant, while driving with Lord Ormiston? Why did the hectic bloom of her pale cheek glow to brightness, and her languid eye light up with joy, when she described Evelyn from afar dismounting from his horse, advancing up the steps of the terrace? Why did her heart beat so quickly as he approached? and wherefore was she silent when she met his eye? That eye beamed on her with no softer glance than that of friendship; why could she not reply to the question so calmly uttered? She knew not. Eighteen summers had not yet shone upon her, and she had till that time lived apart from all intercourse with those of her own age.

"She never loved till now."

And did she then love him? Alas, that beneath the influence of that air, which was daily reviving her delicate health, she should be deemed to breathe the atmosphere of a passion, which, like the insidious disease that preyed upon her frame, should only be revealed by the destruction it should effect!

But the hour had not arrived for Caroline to be aware of the cause which now threw more than a summer

sunshine over all around her. Two months flew swiftly by, and Evelyn was still near her; and her dear Lord Ormiston was kind and good as ever, and her father happier than she had ever seen him. She looked not to the morrow, she realized not the remembrance that "all that's bright must fade." When, in other days, she sang of earthly love, knowing it but by name, it seemed as if the elements of that strongest sentiment of woman's heart were heard in her strain. How much more, then, in these days, when the sentiment, in all its pure fervency, gave an expression, whose source was not even suspected by him who inspired it!

But not thus unsuspecting was Mr. Somerville. His watchful eye perceived the emotion, which, with all her inmate modesty, was unwillingly betrayed, when Evelyn approved her song, in language to which past remembrances lent a tone of tenderness not excited by the singer. Mr. Somerville judged it best, however, to appear blind to what she could not hide from one so devoted to her every interest. He judged with all a father's partiality that it would be difficult for a young man of Evelyn's taste and feelings to resist the fascination of Caroline; especially, should he discover that he was himself the object of her preference; nay, with the high opinion he had formed of Evelyn's worth and character, he felt that to no one could he entrust his daughter's happiness with more assured satisfaction; again, he thought, that, were his surmises unfounded, the suggestion might awaken in her bosom thoughts which, but for that, might have slumbered; or, if but in the dawn of their existence, might fade away in absence, in the society of others of her own age. He dreaded, besides, in the delicate state of her health, to enter on any agitating or exciting subject; and the very tenderness which sought to spare her the pain of a moment, served to lull her more and more in the dream of security.

It was under these circumstances that Mr. Somerville received a letter requiring his immediate pre-

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sence at his rectory. What was to be done? He could not think of subjecting Caroline to the fatigue of a hurried journey, in her weak state; and yet to leave her alone at the house which they inhabited, though so near Ormiston Hall, was not to be thought of. Lord Ormiston earnestly and affectionately urged her father to entrust her to his care; pointed out a suite of apartments, in which, he said, she might at all times enjoy perfect solitude and tranquillity; and entreated him to give up every thought of removing her from a spot which had already produced such an improvement in her. "Besides," urged Lord Ormiston, "your duty will not long detain you, and then you can return to find her restored to perfect health."

Mr. Somerville felt the force of the plea, and, but for his anxiety on the subject of his daughter's interest, he would have yielded without a scruple. She herself decided the matter: she scarcely analysed her own feelings, nor did she know why she felt so averse to returning, at that time, to the loved rectory—that spot where her happy childhood had passed in undisturbed enjoyment, where so many occupations, once full of deep interest to her, had been interrupted by her decline of health: why did she not wish to renew them? How could she bear to see her father depart, even for a brief interval,—she, who had never, till then, been one day separated from him? She could not reply; but she felt that she could relinquish everything sooner than Ormiston, at that time. Her father saw her struggle, and he—who had never resisted one of her innocent wishes,—how could he then refrain from yielding to Lord Ormiston's entreaties?

Caroline and her attendant became inmates of Ormiston Hall; and Mr. Somerville, notwithstanding that faith which was wont to keep his mind in peace, departed, not without an anxious throbbing at his heart, as for the first time he left his darling to the care of others.

CHAPTER X.

A body may, in simple way,
Read love in shepherds' eyes;
A body may,—ah! well-a-day!
Find love though in disguise.
There is a body loves a body,
I could tell you who——

OLD SONG.

It was matter of surprise to Margaret, that she should miss Evelyn's society so much as she did; and unwillingly she made the acknowledgment, not without shame, to her sister, in the privacy of their chambers: there, when the rest of the household had retired to rest, they were wont to converse over the events of the day, to speak freely of their several interests, with that warm sympathy, which, next to that of a dearer tie, is the sweetest which human love creates between heart and heart.

Whatever difference of disposition may exist between sisters, there is a secret bond which unites the most dissimilar in that connexion: the very varieties of character which we observe in those with whom we have lived from infancy, serve to cement a pure affection, unlike in nature to any other: the remembrance of it sheds a subdued radiance on after hours, when separation, by other ties, or by death, has thrown us on a cold world, to meet its trial unsupported by such alleviating sympathy.

Perhaps Susan, in more reflective mood, would have avoided the subject, for she would have dreaded to appear, even to herself, in the light of a dissembler, while seeking to elicit from her sister the expression of regret at Evelyn's absence; but she had observed a sigh escape her dear Margaret when she spoke of him, and hope whispered that, perhaps,

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after all, she might yet prefer Evelyn to the present object of their mutual preference. Alas! the sigh was not for Evelyn.

Mr. Hamilton had seemed, latterly, to shun her society, even preferring to converse with the Miss Sherbournes,—without being aware of it; she missed the thousand attentions with which Evelyn used to gladden those moments in which he was absent or inattentive; and, though unwilling to avow, even to herself, that she regretted these, she found more leisure to remark the listless air with which Eric Hamilton heard her speak, or, what was yet more strange, the sudden interest which he appeared to take in every look and movement of her sister.

“Can it be, Susan,” said she, suddenly breaking a silence which the anxiety of their mutual thoughts had occasioned—can it be, that he is indifferent to me? Can it be, that those are right, who accuse him of caprice, as well as want of principle? Did you hear what that tiresome Lord Sherbourne was whispering to me concerning him this evening, just as Eric was advancing to speak to me. He said that——— Oh! but I will not repeat it, it would be treason to entertain, for a moment, such thoughts as Lord Sherbourne does about him. Do tell me, Susan, honestly, and do not fear to trust me—do you believe that he loves me still?” “I cannot doubt it,” said Susan, while the quiver of her pale lip might have betrayed the deep emotion, with which she uttered words so painful to her heart, had not Margaret been too easily blinded by that passion, which, when unhappy, renders even the best natures selfish. Susan turned away, and appeared to be employed in arranging books on her table; and it was a relief. When Margaret spoke again, it was on the subject of Lord Sherbourne and Mr. Elliott.; her language was by no means commendatory, and Susan thought her a little severe; for, deeply engaged as she had long been in the regulation

of her own impulses, she was more prepared than her sister for the exercise of that charity which thinketh no evil, but hopeth all things; and which, while it is not blind to the truth, restrains the expression of it; when to the detriment of another.

"I think, Margaret," said she, "you should make allowance for the weakness of a father's partiality, and the natural desire he feels, that his daughters should meet with that admiration, and the success in life, he thinks their due."

"Yes," said Margaret; "but is it not revolting to hear the language of flattery with which he assails my father's ears from hour to hour? Is it not hurtful to your feelings, to see him continually forcing Miss Sherbourne to his notice, and placing my father in an awkward position, by obliging him to utter compliments to her, while the poor girl is evidently as much the victim of her father's schemes? Did you not observe to-day, Susan, the pains he took, that Miss Sherbourne should be the person to accompany my father in the curricule, though he wished me to do so? Come, dear Susan, you must confess with all your charity, that his scheming is really odious." Susan smiled, for she could not entirely dissent from what her sister said; but merely observed, that she did not fear for the peace of mind of her dear father.

"No," said Margaret, laughing; "but what think you of your own, Susan? What say you to the ill-veiled attack of Miss Anne on the heart of Lord de Tracey? Do you not fear the result?"

"No, indeed," replied Susan, with readiness, which confirmed Margaret in the supposition, which was daily gaining ground in her mind, that there was already an understanding between Lord de Tracey and her sister. He had won Margaret, by degrees, to a better opinion of him. His unfeigned admiration of her dear sister—the submissive manner with which he bore her apparent coldness—although, as she thought,

deeply affecting his heart—the control which he had kept over his temper, and the pleasing style of his manners and conversation, added to the softened tone in which he now spoke of Mr. Hamilton, who at first had seemed the object of his dislike, had combined to raise him in Margaret's good opinion, and to cause her to unite with her father in wishing that Susan should, one day, return his affection. Margaret knew not what suffering she was inflicting on her sister, while she pleaded his cause, and eagerly and affectionately inquired whether she indeed felt no corresponding sentiment with his? On that very morning her father had spoken with Susan on the subject, and had expressed his high opinion of Lord de Tracey, in terms of undivided approval,—adding, how happy it would make him, should his dear Susan ever be able to return his affection.

True it was that Susan was determined to stifle a preference which she felt to be injurious to her sister's happiness. "But wherefore," thought she, "should I force myself to forget him, and still worse, to encourage the addresses of another, for whom I cannot feel sincere affection? Methinks the voice of duty, which compels me to relinquish my own wishes, demands not such an effort."

She did not utter these thoughts aloud; but Margaret saw that she was distressed, and struggling to conceal what was passing through her mind: she felt for her suffering, without understanding its cause; and, with an attempt to turn off what she had said, as a joke, although, in reality, feeling unusually depressed, she bade her good night, and Susan, had, at least, the satisfaction to think that her dear Margaret had lain down with a light heart.

Margaret was aroused, next morning, by the entrance of the housekeeper, who, smiling, put into her hands a letter, the bearer of which, she said, was waiting impatiently below for the reply. Margaret peru-

sed its contents with some difficulty; for neither idiom nor spelling being strictly correct, she could not easily decipher the strange hieroglyphics which were intended as letters; it ran thus:—

“ Honored Lady,

Your handmaid, Mary Caimbel, residentee in Nierebach, her father's farm on his Honor's estate, humbly desires to cast herself with gratitude, on *your Honor's* clemency, and entreats you to accept her heartfelt thanks for the Laird Mr. Hamilton's wonderful kindness, in keeping back Mistress Sinclair and her son Dugald from facing the dangers of a tempestuous ocean, and leaving their bones in a foreign country. *Your Honor* heard from your poor petitioner the fact of her having given her promise of marriage to the said Dugald, and as his Honor Mr. Hamilton has so handsomely provided him with a bonny large farm, he wishes the wedding to be soon; and though your Honor's petitioner would not care to bide a year if she could serve your Honor in any way by it, yet she thinks for the poor old body's sake, it would be better there should be a strong active woman as soon as possible in the farm, to mind the kye and the poultry. Your Honor's handmaid humbly entreats the favor that you would be speaking to his Honor General Falkland, to ask leave that his Reverence Mr. Mac Farlane should espouse them, as they would be glad of his Reverence's blessing, and the other minister lives very far off.

“Your Honor's handmaid waits with affectionate duty to his Honor Mr. Hamilton, whom she never can forget, for all his humanity. She remains your Honor's petitioner, and grateful humble servant and handmaid.

MARY CAIMBEL.”

This subject was ever one of interest to Margaret's mind, for it was closely connected with her beloved,

and with the remembrance of his kindness ; but the letter, which amused her from its style, gratified her in another point of view. Margaret was secretly pleased to find her name thus associated with his, in the mind of this simple peasant ; and with more pleasure than she would have derived from the mere fact of witnessing her happiness, or than she even owned to herself, she sent for the happy blushing girl, who related, in her strange Gaelic idiom, the kind visit of "the beautiful laird," as she called him.

"Och !" said she, "did he not look like an angel, when he came out of Dugald's poor bit house, with his bonny gowden hair glancing to the sun ; and then he did no' disdain to take the stirrup cup, as he mounted his bonny white mare, and drank happiness to Dugald and me. Surely he'll get the blessing, and your honor too." Margaret's eye glistened with joy, and her smile was not unremarked by the simple Mary ; for, the unsophisticated heart can sometimes interpret the language of nature more surely than the worldly and the guileful.

Mary was detained at the Castle, to partake of some of the good things, which were ever liberally distributed to the poor in that hospitable mansion ; and, in the mean time, Margaret repairing to her father, it was soon settled that Mr. Mac Farlane should join the hands of Dugald and Mary, and that the joyful occasion should be celebrated by a dinner and ball to all their friends, on the green before the Castle.

Mary departed with a light step, and lighter heart ; nor was she less joyful, when Dugald, who anxiously awaited her return at the gate of the avenue, joined her on her walk homeward, and heard from her lips, the detail of the grand feast which was to be given in honor of their marriage.

This event was not one of indifference to the inmates of Walrond Castle. General Falkland was glad to promote innocent pleasure among his tenants ;

and his daughters, with the liveliness natural to youth, were already busied in giving orders for the rural fête. The Miss Sherbournes thought with secret scorn, of a fête champêtre at such a retired place as Walrond Castle; for their ideas of such an amusement had been only derived from public déjeuners, near London; and their thoughts, accustomed to range over bands of music, colored lamps, gravel walks, satin shoes, gauze bonnets, and tulle dresses, could not anticipate pleasure from a fête where the dancers were to be composed of Highland rustics, in addition to their own party. Of Lord de Tracey they began now to despair. Mr. Elliott they considered rather old, even to flirt with, upon finding their advances had been rather coolly met. Mr. Hamilton they both heartily disliked, because they saw the want of partiality to be quite mutual; and Mr. Richardson was accounted as nobody.

Miss Sherbourne, however, was determined to appear pleased in the prospect of it; not having yet quite abandoned the hope of becoming mistress of a place, which she might, one day, people with guests and amusements more accordant with her taste. Small as were their anticipations of pleasure, however, they determined, like other philosophers, to make the best of their prospects. Miss Anne was preserved from entire discouragement, by a fascinating primrose-colored dress which had not seen the light; one more effort might be made on the heart of Lord de Tracey; at any rate it was something to look forward to, and would break the routine of the long quiet mornings, and the reading and drawing which seemed to make the Miss Falklands so happy.

Their consultation on the subject of the fête was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Richardson, who, leaping rather than walking, made a hop, step, and jump, quite regardless of a small table in his way, when down came books, ink, pens and sundry sheets of cross-written paper, which the Miss Sherbournes

had been addressing to their several female correspondents.

"The Goth!" muttered Miss Sherbourne, with undisguised ill-temper.

"Oh! I beg pardon," exclaimed Mr. Richardson, "I beg pardon, my dear ladies," rising, and placing himself in a ludicrous attitude of mock humility and supplication: while the ink was flowing fast over the pink and yellow paper, and Miss Anne's choler began to rise also.

"What shall I do?"

"Why pick up the things," replied Miss Sherbourne, "and repair, if you can, the mischief you have done."

"O, yes! oh, yes!" said the good-natured Irishman, "with all my heart," at the same time huddling every thing together with his red awkward hands, till books, pens, paper and inkstand, partook of the dark coloring of the Miss Sherbourne's epistles and countenances; "but I'm so happy, I could jump over the moon. Have you heard of the ball?"

"Heard of it? Yes," replied the angry damsel, endeavoring to efface the ink from their letters.

"How charming," continued Mr. Richardson, who did not, or could not, believe so much ill-temper could arise from so trifling a misdemeanor—"how charming it will be! I shall perform my Vestris dance;" and then, with one leg uplifted, and arms outstretched, he began to execute the most grotesque evolutions. "Shall I tell you, ladies, why I am so overjoyed?" suddenly interrupting a pirouette; and stooping down, in his own natural manner, to whisper in Miss Sherbourne's unwilling ear—"shall I tell you? No, I won't; I love mystery; but I've a great deal of foresight, and you'll see if one wedding won't lead to another."

Miss Sherbourne became less angry; her thoughts reverted to the General.

Miss Anne was silent, but attentive; but while this silence reigned, Susan entered.

"What is this?" said she, in her gentle tone.

"Oh, my dear lady," said Mr. Richardson, "it wasn't me that did it, but my leg; I was just practising my Vestris entry, when down came that foolish table,—ink, books, and all."

"Oh, my poor Cowper!" said Susan; "but never mind," added she, as she saw Mr. Richardson's now really distressed face, "never mind, it cannot be helped."

"Mistress of herself, ladies!" said Mr. Richardson, bowing with the most absurd expression of satire to the Miss Sherbournes—"mistress of herself, when china falls!"

Miss Sherbourne flounced out of the room, and almost ran against Margaret, who, followed by Mr. Hamilton, was entering laden with Tartan shawls, colored stuffs, silk handkerchiefs, and ribbons, culled from the only shop in the village, where such finery was sold.

"I have been looking for you every where," said Margaret to her sister, "do come and help us, dear Susan, to choose a smart dress for the bride and the two old ladies. Mr. Hamilton had promised to assist us with his taste; and I think we shall prevail on Lord de Tracey to do so too," added she, with an arch look at her sister, who turned away to conceal that she could not join in the happy smiles of her sister. "Here is Mr. Richardson," continued Margaret, "quite ready; so we only want Mr. Elliott to make our conclave complete;—but no, we will not apply to him, for he is too fastidious to make a choice."

"Happy they," thought Eric, "who have not, on more important matters." His eye rested on Susan, with a look of inexpressible melancholy. Margaret's countenance fell. Susan perceived it, though not the occasion of it, for she dared not meet the eye that might then have revealed its secret. Turning to the shawls and ribbons, as if entirely occupied with them, she be-

gan to unfold them, and continued quickly to interest Margaret on the subject. Mr. Hamilton affected to join in the discussion, and cloaks and gowns were soon selected for the bride and the old parents, and handkerchiefs for Dugald; and Margaret despatched them to their owners.

Just then General Falkland and Lord Sherbourne, followed by Lord de Tracey, entered; and the conversation turning on Highland marriages, Lord Sherbourne continued to prolong the theme till every one was tired of it. He described, with minuteness, the various ceremonies of the kind in other countries, till he carried them back to the ancient Jewish customs, in so tiresome a manner that Lord de Tracey yawned—Mr. Hamilton stole out of the room—and poor Susan was left alone to endure the irksome sound of his voice, and the fulsome flattery with which he continued to weary her.

“Pray, Miss Falkland, you, who are so deeply read in all these matters, can you tell me whether the Jewish brides wore veils at the betrothing, as well as at the marriage ceremony itself?”

Susan confessed her ignorance, but said she could procure him the information he wished from Home’s work.

“Ah, yes,” rejoined Lord Sherbourne, “you have, indeed, most wonderful powers of research: your mother, my dear lady, was a remarkable erudite as well as beautiful woman; and certain it is, her daughter partakes of the same taste for learning: the little I know myself just serves to show me my ignorance, and makes me admire those who excel in learning and research.” Susan could not forbear smiling, while she sighed for an excuse to break up this fatiguing tête-à-tête: at length she proposed adjourning to the library, where Mr. Lazenby was busily engaged in writing the dedication of his treatise on his favorite theory; and she was not a little amused to find that

the dedication was to be addressed to herself. He was just reading it to Mr. Hamilton as she entered, and the expression of satisfaction depicted on the countenance of the listener, mingled with a strange look of mirth, was construed by her into the effect of the amusement he derived from Mr. Lazenby's absurdity.

Having found out the passage concerning Jewish brides, which Lord Sherbourne followed her to peruse, she had no further pretext for remaining where the ladies of the house seldom intruded of a morning; and therefore, leaving her two loquacious old guests to contend with one another who should best display the results of their learned cogitations, she joined her sister, who was preparing to walk with the Miss Sherbournes to the neighboring village. At dinner, Lord Sherbourne again renewed the theme, and contrived so successfully to collect his eldest daughter, General Falkland, and Susan, in the evening, and keep them apart from the rest of the society, that Miss Anne had full time to exert her powers of attraction on Lord de Tracey. The result was, that she left him with more hope, than she could have entertained, had she been aware how tired he was of her conversation, which Mr. Elliott declared to be a deuced nuisance, especially when a man had got hold of a new novel.

CHAPTER XI.

"If those, who join in shepherds' sport,
Gay dancing on the daisied ground,
Have not the splendor of a court,
Yet love adorns the merry round."

THOMSON-- (*Alfred, a Tragedy.*)

MARY's wedding-day came. It was the first of June, and bright and beautiful as summer's day could shine. The landscape around Walrond Castle was enlivened by groups, in gay colored Tartans, winding through the avenue, and gradually collecting around a piper, who blew his gay summons with increasing diligence. Most of the happy rustics stood around him, unwilling to advance too near the Castle, till the bridal party should arrive, and the gentlemen and ladies come forth to invite their near approach. Some, more adventurous, loitered near the gate of the kirk,—one entrance of which was from the garden road; but it had been determined that the bride and the bridegroom should proceed through the Castle, and be joined by the rest, from without. At an early hour, Mary, decked in a white muslin gown, her hair fastened with a snood of blue ribbon, and her person partially covered by a bright red shawl, which she esteemed her greatest finery, was seen advancing, supporting her bridegroom's aged mother on the one side, and her own on the other. Two rosy bride's-maids followed, and one of them often turned to cast a sly look at Dugald, whose downcast eye and flushed cheek betrayed an emotion of bashfulness, which the great honor of being married in Walrond Castle, in the presence of so many fine folks, excited, more than any, fears respecting the effect he was to produce in his *braw* clothing. Of this he felt tolerably secure, as his eye fell on his bright red waistcoat, azure blue coat with metal buttons, and brilliant silk handkerchief, the gift of the dear young lady.

Mr. Mac Farlane's reverend voice hushed for a while every whisper, and fixed every wandering look,—while, with a peculiarly impressive manner, he called down the blessing of the Most High on the youthful couple. Many eyes streamed with tears of joy : but there were present two souls, who, while they sympathised in the general rejoicing, and united their wishes for happiness to the young pair, felt it no light task to contend with the emotions of their own hearts. Eric Hamilton, who was ever impetuous in his feelings, could scarcely control the expression of them : more deeply did the suffering heart of Susan feel the painful excitement ; but not one trace of that emotion was to be discovered, by eyes that knew not her secret : yet, long after the bridal party was seated round the festive board, she was in the solitude of her own chamber, pouring out her heart upon her knees, while tears came to her relief with the softening influence of that gracious exercise. Margaret's kind eye missed her sister, and she ran to seek her.

“What can be the matter with my dearest Susan?” said she, putting her arms round her neck ; “do not weep, dear, on this happy day : Lord de Tracey will be so unhappy, should he see you thus, and my dear father too. I know how much a religious ceremony* always affects you ; but come, love, we must not grace Mary's wedding-day with tears ; though, I must confess that good Mr. Mac Farlane's prayer was truly touching. Come, come,” continued she, leading her sister by the arm, and, bounding beside her, they were soon amid the group of peasants who were loudly cheering the General, as they drank to his health, and that of the family, in many a draught of mountain dew, tossing their bonnets in the air. Dancing now began, and Mr. Hamilton led forth the bride to the joyous reel. Margaret and the “best man”

* She did not conceive marriage to be merely a civil rite,—who that loves truly could wish to do so ?

were their vis-a-vis. The peasants crowded around, to gaze with wonder on the lovely sylph-like form which glided on the turf with aerial grace; for even their untaught taste acknowledged the power of Margaret's beauty: their admiration was manifested by repeated cheers, as they beheld their native steps executed for the first time with as much grace as spirit. General Falkland gazed on her with all a father's fond partiality, and, turning to Lord de Tracey, asked whether he could not now relinquish his English prejudices, and acknowledge that the Scottish dances admitted of that elegance, which he had hitherto denied them. Lord de Tracey assented mechanically; for perhaps, of all the crowd assembled, his were the only eyes which turned not on Margaret. He was too painfully engaged in doubt, as to the subject of interest which seemed to absorb Susan, who, though she stood at his side, heeded but little the flattering incense which he offered to her. With sad and vacant smile she returned languid answers to his eager interrogatories; as if her thoughts were abstracted from all he could offer to their notice. Despairing of attracting her attention, he strove to excite her jealousy, by devoting himself to Miss Anne Sherbourne, although her countenance was, at that moment, anything but engaging, being vexed and out of humor at observing the General's eye following not her sister, but his own Margaret. At sight, however, of Lord de Tracey advancing to claim her hand for the next dance, her smile returned, and she gave a look of triumph at Susan, as she passed before her.

Hamilton led the bride to one of the seats which were placed around the green, and was soon at the side of Susan. How did her heart throb with irrepressible pleasure, that Lord de Tracey was no longer there to impede the converse of one so much dearer. In the moment of the uncontrollable emotion, even her sister was forgotten, and she who was wont to analyse every

thought with a jealous scrutiny, was at that instant lost to every other impression, save the joy of hearing him address her, of watching the grace which pervaded his liveliest movements, and the sparkling animation which lent interest to his most trivial expressions. He told her all that had passed between the bride and himself, and they smiled together at the simple artless manner in which her happiness was demonstrated, and how she had wished the same bright day might dawn for his wedding. "Ah, Susan," added he, while his eye melted into tenderness, and gazing upon her, "that day will never shine on me." Again he looked, for she was silent; a blush of unwonted brightness mantled on her lily cheek; again it resumed a more than ordinary paleness: the thought flashed across his mind, "Perhaps De Tracey is not to her what I have imagined." And could it be possible? surrounded as he was by those entirely occupied by their own amusement, unobserved by any of their own party—for all, even General Falkland and Mrs. Stewart, were joining the dance. The courage inspired by such a hope, for the first time dawning on him, seemed suddenly to inspire his tongue with a language not to be restrained. The ardour of his passion, and the vehemence of his natural temper burst forth in exclamations, which, had they been rightly understood, might have saved both from much future misery.

But Susan, possessed with the idea that Hamilton's heart had long been given to her sister, imagined that all the regrets he uttered for time and fortune misspent, and talents missapplied, were for Margaret's sake,—that all the vows he made of yet proving the strength of his good resolutions, were poured into her ear, that they might be repeated to her sister.

Eric marked the coldness with which Susan with difficulty appeared to listen to him; it was indeed a hard penance for her to hear from those lips, feelings which, had she dreamed they were breathed for her, would have filled her drooping heart with transport.

When, again, Lord de Tracey joined her, and complained how drearily that day had passed for him, she replied, in the genuine language of her heart's feeling, before she was well aware how she had answered him—"that it had, indeed, been such to her also." Joy sparkled in his eyes, and illuminated his whole countenance; nor did that look escape the eyes of Margaret, who whispered as she passed—"Speak always thus to him, dear Susan; see how handsome you can make him!"

It was almost beyond the utmost effort of her fortitude, at that moment, to answer her sister, while, for that sister's sake, she was struggling to stifle the strongest affection of her human breast. Margaret's words, unwittingly spoken, sounded, at that moment, like the language of triumph over ruined happiness and a broken heart. But not long did such a feeling linger in the heart of one whose high resolve had not been made in the confidence of presumptuous and mere human unassisted strength: surely higher unseen intelligences wait around the path of the virtuous and self-denying, to support them along the thorny path which they are called to tread; and many a sweet, though humble flower, lurks beneath, exhaling its sweetness around the weary pilgrim, reminding him of that pure sphere in which his painful progress is to terminate. In such a light did Margaret's gladness, the next moment, appear to her noble-minded sister, as she watched the innocent cheerfulness of her aspect.

Such was the simple happiness of Mary and Dugald, as they were led away in triumph to the sounds of their rustic music, when the feast was concluded; and with such a spirit did she listen to the blessings poured down on her dear father's head, as the rural crowd dispersed, and left the green in possession of him, his family and guests, who lingered to watch the gay processions moving down the avenue with merry and thankful hearts: a painter might have decked his canvass with

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME OF THE HISTORY OF THE

no mean portraiture, had he seen the General's venerable form standing with dignified and benevolent expression to receive their parting salutations. Margaret, overcome with fatigue, had sunk upon the grass; and her long golden ringlets fell upon her snowy bosom and pure white drapery, with an air of careless grace surpassing in beauty the most studied attitude.

Susan leaned upon her father's shoulder, musing on the happiness of others, till her sweet countenance, partook of the placid expression of her thoughts. The rest of the party clustered in a group at a distance, and here and there the figure of an old peasant, in sober colored garb, whose slower pace delayed his step from the retiring crowd, gave effect, by contrast, to the gaily dressed party of more elevated rank.

But not long did they remain in that position. General Falkland's daughters feared his catching cold, when the evening dew began to fall; and, yielding to their entreaties, he re-entered the saloon, whither the rest of the party soon followed him.

It was a sad termination to this mirthful morning, when, entering her sister's room, just as dinner was announced, Margaret found her stretched on the floor, senseless. Margaret had never beheld any one thus; and in the first agony of her mind, forgetful of every thing save Susan's illness, she rushed into the room where all the company were assembled, calling loudly for help. Hamilton was the first to obey her summons, and ere the rest of the party arrived, assisted her to place Susan on a couch. On beholding her pale lifeless form, Hamilton could not restrain her agonised expression of his feelings, and, in terms of endearment, which he would not have dared to breathe, when she could listen to them, he poured forth his groans and lamentations. Such was the distraction of Margaret, that the sounds fell unheeded on her ear,—but they recalled Susan to life.

Exhausted by the conflicting emotions she had endured during the day, a faintness had seized her, and before she was able to call for assistance, she had become insensible. Scarcely conscious of the import of her lover's expression, yet distressed at witnessing his anxiety, she had yet power feebly to re-assure him, and implore him to retire. He was therefore forced to obey her father's injunctions, that she might be left in quiet, and, joining the rest of the party, to return to the dining room. A messenger was despatched for medical advice, and her father sat down with Margaret to await the result.

This was but the beginning of a dangerous fever, brought on by excess of feeling, constantly restrained, but which was attributed by the General and her sister, as well as by the medical attendant, to having caught cold, after being over-heated in dancing. Susan was thankful to hear such was the assigned cause of her illness, and much did it mitigate her sufferings, that these dear ones remained ignorant of the grief which preyed upon her; but the continued necessity of concealing her mind's disease, retarded that recovery so anxiously desired by her friends.

In the mean time, Lord Sherbourne, who was not one to linger where self, and those connected with that all-engrossing object, were overlooked, departed with his wife and daughters, hoping, as he said, from the bottom of his heart, that this illness would not long delay the pleasure he looked forward to, of meeting them in town; whilst he secretly desired that Susan might improve her convalescence in the rural shades, far from a destructive competition with his daughters. Old Mr. Lazenby and Mrs. Stewart were unfeignedly sorry that their dear friends should suffer so much anxiety: the former offered to continue his work in the library of Walrond Castle, and the latter to leave the progress of her sons' lessons entirely to the care of Mr. Dickenson, while she nursed dear Susan: but the

General declined Mr. Lazenby's kind offer, because his loquacity was more than he felt equal to; and Margaret gently refused Mrs. Stewart's obliging services, because she knew that her gruff voice and thick-soled shoes could scarcely be grateful to the ear of an invalid. Mr. Elliott regretted much that several of his numerous engagements tore him from the scene of his anxiety, and Mr. Richardson was forced to follow his leader; but the tear which stole down his red nose was not forced, as he gratefully proffered his thanks for all the kindness received, and joined his unsophisticated expression of good will, to the more fluent, but less sincere, of his more polished friend. Lord de Tracey and Mr. Hamilton lingered: the former spoke with so much respectful tenderness to General Falkland of his beloved Susan, and entreated, with so much earnestness, to be permitted to remain till she should be, at least, convalescent, that her father could not refuse him.

Eric Hamilton, who was always esteemed one of the family, stayed as a matter of course; nor was it surprising to Margaret, that he should look so pale and wan and dejected when her sister was suffering, and herself so deeply distressed.

CHAPTER XII.

"An honest man here lies at rest,
As e'er God with his image blest;
The friend of man, the friend of truth,
The friend of age, and guide of youth."

BURNS.

It was not without an anxious, though scarcely definable foreboding, that Evelyn saw Mr. Somerville depart, while his daughter became established as an inmate of Ormiston Hall; certain it is, that, apart from any superstitious trust in feelings which may arise from natural constitution, or from the combination of outward circumstances, those who have watched the state of their minds, previous to the occurrence of any calamitous event, have remarked that there was often a weight upon their spirits, for which they could not account by any past circumstance, and which seemed with a still voice to warn them of coming evil. May not such feelings be given by that merciful Power, which has respect to the weakness of frail mortality, and which, with more than parental tenderness, would warn his poor children of the hour of trial, that they may not meet it unprepared? Even though the awakened mind may not be enabled to trace distinctly the features of the coming evil, yet, to every well-ordered spirit, there will be a degree of watchfulness over temper and conduct, in proportion of danger. In such a frame of mind did Evelyn spend the long gloomy day which succeeded that of Mr. Somerville's departure. Much had he struggled against the bitter sense of disappointment which had blighted his early dream of happiness; and the effort had so far succeeded, that his regrets were at least kept in abeyance through that Providence in which he had ever been wont to put his trust. He gratefully acknowledged, that though na-

ture's feelings were not in this respect conquered, yet they were at least subdued; and while he employed each hour in the fulfilment of affectionate or charitable duty, he had a comforting sense of possessing, at least, peace of mind, if not the happiness which he had sighed for: but when he looked at the frail and delicate being who was now intrusted to the care of a very old man,—when he considered the distance which at every moment separated her father still further from her,—he could not but entertain an anxious desire that the business which had called him from thence might soon be terminated, and that she might be restored safely to his parental care. There was one circumstance which greatly added to this desire—the delicacy natural to so honorable and right-minded a character as Evelyn's, upon the first suspicion of a growing partiality towards himself, on the part of this interesting girl. Although modest to a sensitive degree, her simple, unaffected manners betrayed, at times, unwillingly, the emotions which filled her heart. Evelyn knew not how deep a root the attachment had taken in so short a time, but there was enough in the bare suspicion of such a possibility to fill his upright mind with apprehension, and to arm him doubly against the chance of deceiving her by fallacious hopes. Too well did he know and feel the misery of such disappointment, and too much did he prize the delicacy and honor of woman, willingly to permit so pure-minded a girl as Caroline to commit herself, by the betrayal of unrequited feelings: it was, perhaps, owing to the reserve which he felt himself called upon to maintain, from the moment of her father's departure, particularly in the absence of his uncle, that poor Caroline's attachment became more manifest, by the anxiety which Evelyn's altered manner occasioned her.

The health of Lord Ormiston became daily weaker, and he could no longer take those drives with his favorite Caroline, which left Evelyn at liberty to enjoy

exercise by himself, or the privacy of his own apartment. But, whenever he offered to relieve her of her watchful care over his uncle, and entreated that she would go out alone in the carriage, rather than confine herself so much to a sick dark chamber, she would cast so reproachful and so sad a look upon him, that he was fain to turn away and absent himself, rather than encourage, by his presence, that affection which he perceived only with unmingled regret. At other times, his uncle would insist on his accompanying Caroline in her walk; and he could not, without absolute rudeness, refuse compliance. Then, how did her soft smile and joyous expression pierce his heart with un-availing regret! and how did his pensive looks and listless replies awaken in her young and guiltless heart a deeper interest! She sometimes rallied him on his sadness; then, with a tenderer tone, implored him to make her the confidant of his cares—assuring him how strictly she should guard the trust.

It was while walking one fine summer's evening on the terrace, that Caroline, observing a more than ordinary depression on Evelyn's spirits, strove to arouse him by every means which her feeling heart dictated. She had gathered a nosegay of various colored heart's-ease, and while twining them together so as to mingle their purple and white and yellow leaves, as she deemed most harmoniously, she placed them in Evelyn's hand, and with a faint blush, spoke the expressions of her simple heart, wishing his might be in unison with the name of that sweet flower. Evelyn smiled at the commonplace sentiment, which seemed, for the first time, to have struck this artless girl as something delightful: but his attention was, at that instant, diverted by the voice of Gilpin, Lord Ormiston's servant, who was calling loudly to him, to return to the house. His master had been suddenly seized by numbness in his limbs, and had lost his speech, Evelyn flew to his couch, where the faithful attendant had

already placed him, and messengers were speedily despatched for medical aid. Caroline, who had followed him with as much speed as her strength would admit, reached the drawing-room with difficulty, and finding it empty, and an air of confusion around the sofa, from whence Lord Ormiston had been taken, and with an indefinable dread of ill, though she could hardly surmise the nature of it, sank breathless at the door. As she recovered, she looked around her, as if the inanimate objects could reveal the tale of woe which her fears foreboded; but, unable yet to rise, she vainly struggled against her weakness, and again sank back with a despairing sensation of helplessness. Then did a sense of her folly, in encouraging hopes which had never been met by return, dawn upon her mind in full and mortifying reality. She felt something cold beneath her hand;—it was the nosegay she had given Evelyn, which had fallen as he ran to obey the sad summons. “He has cast my flowers away,” thought she; “they are already withered, crushed beneath my hand; now an emblem of my departed peace of mind, never to return. The grave,” she said aloud, “the grave shall be my rest!”—As she spoke, a footstep advanced.

Evelyn was beside her: the shock he had received by his uncle’s sudden attack, had fixed an unnatural flush upon his cheek, which had succeeded to the paleness of alarm; he knew that Caroline was yet ignorant of what had happened, for the whole household were gathered in the hall, which led to Lord Ormiston’s apartment, anxiously awaiting the first report of their dear master’s condition. Lord Ormiston had spoken; and as soon as he had recognised Evelyn, had inquired for Caroline, and eagerly asked why she was not also beside him? “Let her come,” he said, “to receive my parting blessing.”

It was a sad task to Evelyn, to break the intelligence to one whom he already found in so weak a situation;

but the thoughts in which Caroline had been engaged had armed her with a resolution and strength which astonished him. She scarcely accepted his aid, as she arose from the attitude of prostration, into which her weakness had thrown her; and with an assurance that she should betray no emotion at sight of Lord Ormiston's altered appearance, (which she strictly fulfilled,) she followed Evelyn with a firm step to the sick chamber.

"Grant me but one boon," said she, in a low but decided voice, as she drew near to the half open door of Lord Ormiston's room—"let me be with him, to nurse and attend him to the last. My days are numbered, nor can any circumstance hasten or prevent the event: let me be with him to the end."

Evelyn knew not how to reply; but, pressing her hand with an affectionate warmth, which the sadness and solemnity of that moment warranted, they walked together to the side of the sick man's couch.

"I am here," said Caroline, taking his hand with a gentleness which could not startle or alarm. "Thank you for the permission."

"Blessings on you, my sweet girl!" said the kind old man, returning her pressure, with a grasp so different from that of the lively and healthful, that those who feel it from the hand of age and sickness, at such an hour, experience a sensation of mingled awe and veneration, such as can be better felt than described. Caroline had often stood by the bed of death;—she had been called, in early years, to hear a mother's last blessing, and since then her feet had never shunned to cross the threshold of poverty and sickness. Naturally weak and timid as she was, she had looked on the glassy eye, and marked the damp of death steal over the faded cheek, without alarm; for she experienced, at such seasons, the blessedness of those meditations, which, soaring far beyond the frail emblems of decaying mortality, bestow a firmness, which others, endow-

ed with more natural courage, might have sought in vain. The gates of heaven seemed to her eye of faith to open before her, while the world and all its dearest joys far receded. She knelt beside her aged friend in prayer, for she saw that he would soon be called away, and each moment was precious. Silently she united in spirit with his devout ejaculations, and the conviction of his eternal salvation calmed her gentle spirit, when, after a few hours he sank, with the serenest expression of inward peace, into his last sleep. His parting words were blessings on Evelyn, on Mr. Somerville, and Caroline; then, turning to his sorrowing dependants, he commended them to Evelyn, and seemed no longer to have an earthly care or thought.

Who that has passed from the chamber of death, where they have realized the nothingness of all worldly anxieties,—where they have seen the utter worthlessness of all earthly supports, to afford either hope or consolation in the hour of extreme need,—but will feel the constraining power of faith and prayer; and, while yet the prospect of that eternity, to which they have seen a soul depart, is open before them, will not seek, upon their knees, that grace which only can give strength to travel on in hope to the end of the journey? Happy they, who, at such an hour, feel no disquieting dread for those who have gone before; but who, with overflowing hearts, can scarcely heed the tears which natural regrets call forth, while blessing the Almighty for his saints departed, and can arise with serene minds to pursue their steadfast way wherever Providence shall lead!

In such a spirit did the gentle Caroline lie down that night to rest, after she had written the simple detail of the day's sad events to her beloved father. Tears flowed fast as she penned the words, for dearly had she prized the almost parental tenderness with which that good old man had loved her; and, since

she had learnt to connect Evelyn with every feeling, there was an additional claim on her warm and affectionate heart; she felt that the link was broken which bound them together; it was this which most inspired her resignation, as she dwelt upon the mournful theme; yet exhausted nature claimed repose, and she had not long bedewed her pillow with tears, when she sank into as calm a sleep as a child upon its mother's breast.

Among the many painful reflections which, after the solemnities of the first shock of the last awful scene had subsided, crowded on the mind of Evelyn, not the least of his anxieties was occasioned by the situation of Caroline Somerville. Her venerable protector was taken away; her father was distant many hundred miles, and much delay might occur in the period of his return, owing to the frequent irregularity of the posts in this retired situation. He knew that it was not in the midst of crowds only that the world's suspicion might be excited, for far and wide will the eye of calumny reach; and he dreaded lest the fame of his amiable young friend should suffer by her remaining in the house, of which he was now the sole master: nor could he refrain from speculating upon what might be the judgment of those whose opinion he valued far beyond that of the world's. Yet, how could he leave Ormiston Hall at such a time? After the last sad duties had been paid to his uncle's remains, could he be justified in intrusting Caroline to the care of servants only? No; it was impossible: yet not without uneasiness did he come to such a conclusion: though fully aware of the nature of his own feelings, he could not mistake what hers had been, and he dreaded not only rendering her still more unhappy, but also exciting in the mind of her father an unfavorable opinion of his conduct towards this guileless and interesting girl.

When, therefore, he had fulfilled those duties which called for his immediate attention, he addressed a let-

ter to Mr. Somerville, informing him of the melancholy event that had taken place, and mentioning, as a matter of course, his expectation of seeing Mr. Somerville, in a very short time, even if he was not able to attend the funeral.

Three days gloomily succeeded. Poor Caroline, while, in the solitude of her own chamber, had ample leisure to meditate on the past, so replete to her with mournful interest, seemed, during the last three months, which had passed to her so speedily, to have existed years; for her whole thoughts were concentrated in the result of this short period. She dwelt with fond remembrance on every look and tone of him who now studiously avoided her. She understood not the motive, but she deplored his absence. She shrank from the prospect of those future regrets, which could only be insured by a continuance of the intimacy which had already proved so fatal to her peace of mind. She thought but of the present; and as she sat gazing from her window on the bright flowers, which bloomed as gaily as in the days of her past enjoyment, she sighed, to think that she no longer prized them, since he was no longer by her side; and longed to hear his step, or see but his shadow pass over the walk, where he used daily to wander with her; then she would endeavor to read, but the sound of a footstep, or the closing of a door, in the corridor, filled her with the thought that it might possibly be his step, and her eye wandered over the page, and her hand sank upon her knee;—when, again, the mournful silence which reigned through the house, left her to the painful consciousness of her solitude. Twice every day she received, indeed, a message of kind inquiry after her health, which she expected with an anxiety only to be understood by those who have known the thrill which the name beloved excites, when even in the commonest expressions of courtesy; and she could not fail to remark, that it was not the unassisted attention of do-

mestics which supplied her table with those dishes which had been usually preferred by her changeful appetite, or filled her windows with those flowers whose fragrance was not too powerful for her delicate nerves: she could not but remark these gentle unremitted cares; but still she saw him not—still she heard not his voice; and she feared, at last, that she dared not utter her fears to any of the servants who waited upon her, that his grief might have affected his health; and the thought preyed upon her, till her cough grew hourly worse, and the hectic flush on her cheek gave evidence of the fever which ran through her veins and consumed her strength.

On the eighth day after Lord Ormiston's death, she received her father's answer to the sad announcement she had made to him. Fond and endearing as his letters had always been, the contents of this one went most forcibly to her heart; and as the tears streamed from her eyes, she felt the blessedness of possessing such a parent, with so grateful a sentiment of gratitude, that every other thought faded away, and she resolved to devote her life to repay his kindness and promote his happiness, unmindful of her own. She had scarcely laid her letter down, when a gentle knock at the door arrested her attention. It was Gilpin—her dear friend's aged servant. She stretched out her hand kindly to him, and they were silent. He first spoke. "I come, Madam, to inform you, that my Lord wishes to see you for a few moments, if quite convenient to yourself."

Caroline felt startled; she had not heard him mentioned by his title, and her thoughts were bewildered.

The good old servant fancied that she dreaded the meeting. "His Lordship bade me say, that he would not trouble you, Madam, did you feel unequal to seeing him this morning."

Caroline assured him how gladly she accepted his offer, and in a few moments Evelyn stood before her.

It was the first time they had met since they had listened together, by the dying bed, to the blessings which were called down on their heads, with tender earnestness, by the lips of their departed friend. The mournful scene was renewed before them; and, with hands clasped together, they joined their tears of united sympathy to the memory of one so justly beloved. Evelyn saw in her only the friend and solace of his revered uncle; but in the depths of her struggling heart there was a sensation of happiness from the sight of so dear an object, which outweighed the memory of the dead; and in many an after day, the remembrance of that moment of affectionate sympathy endeared him still more to her. He spoke not of the mournful ceremony which he was about to attend, but his dress seemed to declare it, and when he arose to take leave of her, she inquired whether she might be permitted to enter the chamber which overlooked the entrance gate, or, at least, gaze on the funeral procession?

Evelyn entreated her to refrain from such an excitement to her feelings; but she would not be denied.

"A few hours, perhaps, may bring Mr. Somerville," said Evelyn, "and then, I trust, you will be more at ease." Then, begging her to ask for all that could minister to her comfort, he bade her farewell, and hastened to join the sad procession, of which, among many mourners, he was, indeed, the chief.

It was not without the deepest emotion that Caroline witnessed the remains of her beloved friend borne from the threshold, which she had trod so often with him in days gone by—from that roof, where she had contributed to the gladness of his benevolent smile, and where she had so often listened to the tones of his gentle voice, breathing out kindness with every word he spoke,—now for ever hushed and silent in his narrow home. Evelyn was right in advising her to refrain from so sad a spectacle; for when she re-

turned to her chamber, she sank exhausted on her couch: nor was it without much increase of pain and fever that she arose on the following day. Her father, notwithstanding every exertion, did not arrive till two days after the funeral, and she had rallied, or, at least, had seemed to rally, for she made an effort to appear composed; and notwithstanding all she had gone through, her health had not suffered. Again she enjoyed the society of Evelyn, while her father's presence removed the restraint which his sense of duty had imposed. But who has not experienced the gloom which prevails around the board, where the one is withdrawn, to whom all had looked with mingled respect and affection? Who has not felt the mournful silence, with difficulty broken, by trivial observations, and where the nature of the scene impedes conversation, on the subject nearest the heart? There are few, even among the young, who have not known the sadness of such an hour; there are few so thoughtless, that they cannot recal the impression made by the solemnity of the time: but the world, with all its cares and anxieties, again calls for activity; and some soon mingle in its noise and in its mirth, and the voice of reflection is suspended.

Not so was it with the three friends now assembled; and they were destined in a few days to part, but not to forget.

Mr. Somerville's eyes became, at length, open to the danger which lurked beneath the present enjoyment of Caroline's intimacy with Evelyn; and while he entirely exonerated him from blame, he resolved to remove her from a fascination, which he perceived to be destructive of her peace.

CHAPTER XIII.

POOR Caroline spent a sleepless night previous to the day of her departure from Ormiston. Each trifling circumstance which had attended her late intercourse with the object of her affection was renewed to her mind, with all the vividness which memory lends to past enjoyment in the hour of regret; and she could scarcely realize the painful thought of that separation which awaited her on the morrow. Vainly she strove to repel the conviction of the comparative indifference he had evinced towards her; for, young and inexperienced as she was, she did not dream that his affections could possibly be fixed on a person who did not return his love; she deemed it impossible that another could be preferred to Evelyn, should he have bestowed on any so rich a boon; and her thoughts fondly lingered around the hope, that time might yet restore him to her society. Thus did she spend the feverish wakeful hours which intervened between the moment she bade him good night, and that on which they again met at breakfast the next day.

Evelyn also looked depressed, and the fact was some consolation to the sorrowing Caroline; who could scarcely refrain from tears, when he addressed her with words of kindness—words which, uttered by lips beloved, are far more touching to the wounded heart, than those of unkindness. Who has not experienced the difficulty of concealing the heart's emotion at such moments? A short interval of bustle succeeded to the almost silent repast. Evelyn and Mr. Somerville were, meanwhile, conversing in a low voice in the room adjoining; and Caroline seized this moment to write some verses, which she had often loved to repeat when the sentiments they expressed were

understood, but of which, till that moment, she scarcely felt in their full strength; then, hastily gathering a branch of roses, which flung its flagrant blossoms on the parterres near the window where she was sitting, she placed the flowers beside the verses on the table, where they might meet Evelyn's eye.

The bitter moment arrived. It was well for poor Caroline that the many minor calls for attention, incident to the commencement of a journey, gave her opportunity to summon all her fortitude, and to speak the parting word with assumed composure. She hoped that her father would attribute her emotion, in a great measure, to the remembrance of their departed friend; for how could she confess, even to such a father, the humiliating truth, of her having bestowed her affections unsought? The native dignity of woman came to her relief; and, though her poor heart beat to suffocation, she contrived to say farewell, with something like composure; nor did she yield to tears till her father fell asleep; and then, unobserved, she gave loose to her sorrows: nor was it without an oppressive sense of melancholy, that Evelyn watched the receding vehicle that bore his two amiable friends from Ormiston Hall, and left him without one sympathising ear to listen to the mournings of his lonely hours, without one heart to feel what he could not have expressed, but which he hoped had been understood by those congenial minds. "Surely," said he to himself, "Miss Somerville must have perceived that long before my uncle's death, my spirits were depressed with an untold sorrow; surely that amiable girl will not indulge a feeling detrimental to her peace of mind; or how can I feel absolved, in being the cause, however innocent, of any suffering to her?" He looked around; the large empty chambers, of which he was now the sole possessor, filled his mind with a sense of his loneliness; the lofty trees, which waved their leafy branches in thick and verdant mas-

ses, far as eye could reach, the sunny terrace, which glowed beneath the splendour of a summer's morning, rich in all the variegated brightness of the beautiful flowers with which it was ornamented—the laughing smile of gaudy day, which seemed to pervade all nature,—struck him with a deeper impression of the comparative sadness and desolation of his heart: possessed with all that rank and fortune could bestow, he experienced a deeper gloom than he had ever known in days when the slender pittance inherited from his father was his sole possession, but when a bright hope irradiated his prospects, and animated the enjoyments of the present. He threw himself on a chair by his writing table, with the intention of addressing his dear friend, General Falkland, to whom he had but written a few hurried words in the first moments of his distress. The kind and sympathizing reply which lay before him was dated “London,” and a thousand conflicting thoughts, which the knowledge of Margaret's situation there excited, arrested his pen, and he remained musing for some time, in sad mental abstraction.

As he arose from his reverie, the flowers left by Caroline attracted his attention, and the page beneath them, written in characters which he had seldom seen, but which he recognised to be her hand writing. He sighed mournfully, as he perused the following lines, for they echoed the feelings of his own heart; whilst he grieved to think that they should express those of hers:—

FROM THE TAUNTON NEWSPAPER.

“ Oh ! 't is one scene of parting here,
 Love's watchword is 'farewell;'
 And almost starts the following tear,
 Ere dried the last that fell.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—These lines deserve to be acknowledged, from whosoever pen they proceed, they are beautiful.

'Tis but to know that one most dear
Grows needful to the heart,
And straight a voice is muttering near,
Imperious—' Ye must part !'

Oft, too, we doom ourselves to grieve
For wealth or glory rove ;
But say, can wealth or glory give
Aught that can equal love ?

Life is too short thus to bereave
Existence of its spring ;
Or e'en for one short hour to leave
Those to whose hearts we cling.

Count o'er the hours whose happy flight
Is shared with those we love ;
Like stars amid a stormy night,
Alas ! how few they prove !

Yet they concentrate all the light
That cheers our lot below ;
And thither turns the weary sight,
From this dark world of wo.

But happiest they, whose gifted eye
Above this world can see,
And those diviner realms descry,
Where partings cannot be :

Who, with one changeless Friend on high,
Life's varied paths have trod ;
And soar to meet beyond the sky,
The ransom'd and their God."

The religious expression of the concluding stanzas absolved Caroline, in his mind, from all imputation of indelicacy, in laying before him the language of her heart ;—a heart which, in spite of her native modesty, and his endeavors to blind himself, had already betrayed itself to him. His thoughts followed her with mournful contemplation, and still the page was

blank before him in which he intended to write to his friend, when the day was already far advanced, and the servant put into his hand a packet of letters. Many of these were but the commonplace compliment of a sympathy slightly felt, if felt at all, on his late loss. These he carelessly glanced over, till opening one to which he read the signature, "Sherbourne," a name on one of its long and closely written pages caught his eye, which instantly rivetted his attention. Newspapers, letters, flowers, and verses were pushed aside, and he began eagerly to peruse an effusion, of which the subject alone, not the writer, could have excited so much interest : it ran as follows :—

" My dear young friend,

" You will, I am sure, feel no hesitation in believing with what deep and heartfelt concern I heard the news of your lamented uncle's death. It was, doubtless, but the transplanting of a worthy soul to a more congenial sphere ; and in such a light, the reasonableness and justness of a mind such as yours will have regarded the removal of that excellent person from a world in which he was so eminently useful.

I need not now dwell on the encomiums of which my mind suggests the utterance, since you are aware that I had, in early life, the distinguished advantage of Lord Ormiston's particular acquaintance and friendship. My studies were, in a great measure, directed by his guidance and advice, and my youthful pleasures, enhanced by his countenance and pleasing society. May I venture to add, that I trust my advancing years may boast the renewed happiness of an intimacy with one, who, I make no doubt, from what I have observed, is so eminently calculated to supply the vacancy which has been left in society, by the demise of his worthy uncle ? It is too much to hope, that you will have sufficiently recovered your spirits to appear in town this season, when my house will always be open

to receive you, and where, I flatter myself, you may meet many whose minds will be congenial with your own? Lady Sherbourne unites with me in the expression of this wish most heartily.

"You will not, perhaps, be surprised to hear of two marriages, which are much talked of: indeed, I make no doubt that, ere now, General Falkland has apprised you of them. His eldest daughter is very shortly to be united to Lord de Tracey, whom, I think you are acquainted with. Those who are mindful only of worldly advantages, consider this a very fortunate alliance; but those who, like myself, regard sound principle and religious faith as the chief ingredients of domestic peace, cannot but tremble for the result, since his Lordship is better known as a lucky man on the turf, and has shone more in the circles of dissipation, than as one likely to promote the comfort of a home fireside. Miss Margaret, her sister, has been, however, still less fortunate in her choice; and it is the greater pity, as she is, you know, everywhere so highly spoken of, and equally admired for beauty, as for grace of mind and person:—she has fixed her affections on that wild young fellow, Hamilton, who was at Walrond Castle when I last had the pleasure of visiting there. The General has reluctantly yielded his consent, and the weddings are, I understand, to take place in a week or two. The day is fixed; but as I indulge but little curiosity in these matters, except in as far as they may interest my correspondents in the country, I have not ascertained the truth of that report.

"I never saw London so full and so stupid. My girls can scarcely be prevailed upon to go out of an evening. The fact is, their tastes and pursuits are quite of a different order from that of the ordinary run of young ladies: however, I could wish they mingled a little more with those of their own age. Anne cannot cease speaking of that romantic spot where we had last the pleasure of seeing you; she is certainly

devoted to the country, and looks quite pale from the confinement in this smoky town. My eldest girl is pretty well. I should ask them whether they have no message for you, as I know they deeply sympathised in your late loss; but their mother has taken them to a morning concert of sacred music, which they prefer above all other recreation, as more congenial with their views and feelings, than those of a lighter order. I must conclude, being expected to join a meeting of the Royal Society. Pray let us hear very soon from you, as you must be aware how truly anxious we shall be, till we learn that your health has not suffered from your just regrets. Believe me, my dear young friend, with sentiments of the most genuine friendship and esteem, your sympathising friend,

“SHERBOURNE.”

As Lord Sherbourne folded this letter, he flattered himself that, in this hypocritical tirade, he had precisely met the feelings of him whom he addressed, and that the tone of friendly concern which he had assumed, would serve totally to blind Lord Ormiston as to the end he had in view. For the moment he had heard of Evelyn's accession to the title and large property of his deceased uncle, his ambition was awakened to secure the prize for one of the members of his own family; and as he had not yet dismissed all hopes of obtaining General Falkland's hand for his eldest daughter, he considered Lord Ormiston as the next best object on which to fix his regards for Miss Anne. There was a degree of truth in the intelligence which he communicated, with regard to the rumored marriages of the Miss Falklands; for the world, busy though it be, with its selfish speculations, is ever ready to circulate its rumors concerning an expected marriage, especially if the parties have proved an interference to its own views; and in such a light were these beautiful girls regarded by many a worldly parent, such as

Lord Sherbourne: but he was quite concerned that he wrote what was false, when he spoke in so decided a manner of Margaret's proposed union with Mr. Hamilton, for the narrowness of his circumstances was well known; yet it was received by the despairing Evelyn with perfect credence, and, almost in a state of insensibility, he sank in breathless agony. Much as he had striven to school his mind to such a possibility, now that the blow had fallen, it seemed more than his strength of mind could sustain; and, in all the weakness of despair, he hid his face in his hands, and sobbed aloud.

The faithful attendant of his late uncle entered, while he was in this condition, and stood by him, ere he was aware of the presence of any one. "I beg your pardon, my Lord, but I heard your voice as I passed through the hall, and I feared you were ill;—can I bring you any thing?"

At the presence of this good old man, Evelyn revived; he grasped his hand with nervous bewilderment.

"No!" replied he—"no; nothing—nothing;"—then, hastily gathering his letters in his hands, he rushed from the room, and found himself wandering through the wood which stretched behind his house, before he had collected his senses sufficiently to dwell on the cause of his emotion with any thing like calmness. The soft air seemed insensibly to revive him, and he sat down to consider how he should be enabled to bear so heavy a stroke, he then felt a doubt, for the first time, as to the truth of Lord Sherbourne's intelligence, since General Falkland had not mentioned the subject in his last letter of condolence, and he stopped to examine those letters which his distress of mind had hitherto caused him to neglect, in the expectation of finding some allusion to Lord Sherbourne's intelligence. The result was more mournfully convincing: one of them was from a young acquaintance, who seldom failed to insert any news of that description; and

in one of these, Evelyn read the confirmation of his worst fears. Those hopes which, till that day, had never wholly been laid aside, now gave place to hopelessness, and long and deep was his anguish. There is something in the nature of such a disappointment, which removes the voice of consolation farther from our hearts than, perhaps, any other species of misfortune; it is a bitterness which the heart that suffers alone knows, nor can brook that another should intermeddle with. It is a grief more agonising than separation by death; for the hand of the Almighty is displayed in such an awful stroke, and a mind chastened, such as was that of Evelyn, bows beneath the visible chastening: but none, save those who have experienced the anxiety of a long and faithful attachment, repaid by indifference, can know the agony which disappointed love feels by torturing the soul with images of by-gone days of hope and enjoyment, and darkening the present gloom with sad forebodings of protracted woe. At *first* the rebellious heart refuses to acknowledge the directing hand of Providence, in the shaft that has been directed by the agency of a fellow mortal, nor is it till again awakened by religious truth to that certitude, that the mind can resume any healthfulness of tone, or return to the resigned trust in the mercy of God which alone can give peace in the darkest hour.

There are, perhaps, few of Evelyn's sex and age, whose minds are so strongly imbued with the very essence of true religion, as his. It was not, certainly, beneath the guidance of such an one as Lord Sherbourne, that he had learnt to mistrust all that the world calls happiness, unless supported by that sure hope, which sweetens the cup of bitterness, and heightens every enjoyment. The days of his early youth had been divided between the society of his departed uncle and that of General Falkland; and from them he had learnt the blessedness of an unshaken confidence in Divine Providence, and a watchful distrust

of those snares which lead presumptuous youth far from the paths of virtue. Accustomed, therefore, to that surest restraint, he did not long dwell on the delirious suggestions of passion; and, although nature had endowed him with so tender and affectionate a disposition, and that, in spite of his endeavors, his heart still clung to fond regrets, yet he felt the imperious duty of arousing himself to exertion.

Having, therefore, earnestly sought that aid, which is never denied to the sincere worshipper, he strove, vigorously, to banish all selfish considerations,—to think only of the happiness of his beloved Margaret,—and, if possible, to contribute to it himself, even to the destruction of his own. “Did I not tell her,” said he to himself, “how sincerely I prayed for her happiness; though conscious that that happiness depended upon another? Did I not assume a fortitude, which I knew not, then, how little I really possessed? And shall I now yield to selfish sorrow—which may, perhaps, reach her ears, and wound that kind heart, on whose bright path I would not cast one shadow? No! the fervency of my past affection, the prayers I have daily put up for her felicity, shall not be belied by selfish repining; nor shall I seem indifferent to the welfare of him who has been so blest, as to obtain her regard.” With these thoughts he hastened home,—his mind full of generous plans to promote the comfort of one for ever dear to his faithful heart.

His solitary dinner was removed almost untouched, and the distress expressed by his attached domestics was not the language of servile civility, but the sincere, though simple, sympathy of those on whom kindness, directed by good principle, is seldom thrown away. There is a popularity, which may be obtained by unworthy means; but, when those placed by Providence in elevated situations, endear themselves by acts of unwearied benevolence and indulgence, there is a charm in the affection of dependants, recognised

with gratitude by such as are conscious of deserving it. The evening passed more quickly by than Evelyn could have hoped; and as he folded the letter, which his generous heart had dictated with fluency,—but which, from his delicacy of feeling, he dreaded to word so as to give offence where he most meant to oblige,—a throb of honest joy thrilled through his soul, and lent a ray of brightness to the gloom of his disappointed hopes. Surely, the person most averse to receive benefits could not be offended by the generous impulse which dictated the following lines to a supposed successful rival.

“ Dear Hamilton,

“ You have doubtless heard of the sad event which has removed my dear and excellent uncle to a world for which his unshaken faith and exemplary life had so well prepared him; and I am sure you will sympathise with me on this occasion. But I will not dwell on this subject at a time when I trust the prospect is opening upon you of realising a happiness which you have long desired. Believe me, that the congratulations which I now offer are from my heart. I feel real concern, lest the difficulties in which you have been involved may cast a shade over your present enjoyment; and I cannot help trusting in the generous confidence of your friendship so far as to suppose that you will kindly listen to a suggestion, which I venture to offer, in the hope that you will not grieve me by rejecting it.

“ Will you then, dear Hamilton, make what use you please of the money arising from the West Indian property possessed by my lamented uncle, amounting, I believe, to about £20,000, now lying *unemployed* at my bankers. It will be time enough, in after years, to repay a loan which cannot be any sacrifice to one whose wants are so limited as mine, nor can he hope to place it in better hands than those who will use it

to promote the comfort of a very dear and early friend. Pray forgive the intrusion of such a request, should you deem it such, and believe the earnestness of my sincerity when I assure you that you will, by accepting the offer, confer a lasting obligation on your faithful and sincere friend,

“ORMISTON.”

“Pray make my congratulations welcome to her, whose happiness I shall never cease to prize.”

Evelyn found more difficulty in addressing General Falkland on the subject, yet knew not how to avoid it without the appearance of indifference, or what he, perhaps, dreaded yet more—the discovery of those feelings he wished most to conceal; for he was well aware that his friend's partiality for himself had induced him long since to second those wishes, to which his daughter had given so decided a rejection, nor could he indure the thought of intruding one regret in the mind of this respected and beloved friend, for the choice she had made, either on her account or on his own. He therefore vaguely alluded to the happy events, of which he said he had been apprised, and added the most affectionate expressions of his wishes for their happiness.

The excitement which supported him, while fulfilling these duties, enabled him in some measure to subdue the grief of his heart; but when these were concluded, nature again resumed the ascendancy, and for many days his frame partook of the disorder of his mind, and he mourned in sickness, and in solitude, the agonies of a wounded spirit, till again the calls of duty aroused him to activity: nor was he left without reward for the frequent exertions which his benevolence called forth. Mr. Somerville often wrote to him, but made little mention of his daughter, except in compliance with his request to acquaint him with the state of her health; she had, he said, borne the

journey better than could have been expected, and he trusted that on the whole she was a degree stronger than when he had last seen her. His silence on the subject of her spirits assured him of the truth of his suspicions, when he had imagined that Mr. Somerville was not ignorant of her affection for him. "Could it be possible," thought he, "that in after years a dearer interest than that of friendship might render me worthy of that amiable girl? Alas! that I should feel so incapable of transferring that affection, long fixed upon one who can never repay it! Oh that I may learn to think of her as the wife of another—that other my friend, on whom I have laid the weight of an obligation, which doubly calls for the relinquishment of every other feeling than those of which honor and friendship may be the safeguards!"

With such contending thoughts was the mind of Evelyn exercised in his hours of loneliness and leisure. It was well for him, that the situation in which he was now placed called for attention to business of various kinds, precluding the possibility of continued indulgence in themes of such a heart-affecting nature.

CHAPTER XIV.

"I know, I see,
Her merit. Needs it now be shown,
Alas! to me?—
How often, to myself unknown,
The graceful, gentle, virtuous maid
Have I admir'd! how often said,
What joy to call a heart like her's one's own!"
AKENSIDE.

No sooner was Susan restored to convalescence, and enabled to join the little circle in the drawing-room at Walrond Castle, than she was called on to exert herself to part with Eric Hamilton with seeming composure; the effort was, however, rendered easier by the hope which she entertained of meeting him in London,—a hope not altogether unmingled with pleasure, though she blamed herself for admitting so deceptive a feeling, since she could not but regard him in the light of her sister's avowed lover, and one as truly, if not as deeply, beloved by Margaret, as by her. She felt that she could not regret Lord de Tracey's departure; although she was grateful to him for his devotion, and for the delicacy of those attentions which he had quietly, but unceasingly, paid to her, and those dearest to her. In fact, the strong preference which her father evinced towards him seemed his best recommendation, since she was ever wont implicitly to rely on his judgment; although she painfully felt the impossibility of transferring to Lord de Tracey that affection which had so long, so fervently, been bestowed on another.

When she found that Margaret was anxiously awaiting the day when they were to leave the Castle for London, she could not fail to guess the cause; and she resolved more than once to strive to subdue those yearnings of her heart, which, if discovered, must prove fatal to the peace of both.

Margaret, on the other hand, rejoiced once see her dear Susan restored to health, and ~~ani~~ more than usual spirits, in the prospect of again meeting with Mr. Hamilton gave way to the buoyancy of her hopes, in frequent expressions of joy, by which she little knew how she was torturing the heart of his sister. Blinded by the natural enthusiastic ardour of her own mind, she saw all around her in the vivid colouring with which her fancy invested them, and she ceased not to praise Lord de Tracey as highly as she had once censured him. The cause was evident; he also had changed his once unfavorable view of Mr. Hamilton, or had at least seemed to do so; and he rose in proportion, in the estimation of both sisters. It would have been, indeed, difficult for any unsuspecting person not to have been fascinated by the charm of his manner, while he assumed the appearance of possessing excellencies which were but in part his own. He wanted the highest of all motives to guide his actions,—that motive, which alone can hallow the most beneficial deed, and gild the feeblest endeavor with celestial brightness.

It was not without some degree of astonishment Margaret heard of the intimacy subsisting between Evelyn and Miss Somerville. Strange that there should be so great a contradiction in the minds of those who deem themselves sincere; but so it was, that while she fancied that no better tidings could reach her ears than those of his happiness, and while, with the fervency of her devotion to Eric Hamilton, she imagined that she could never think one moment of another; she still felt a little mortified by the rumours afloat of Lord Ormiston's new attachment. "Surely," said she, one day to her sister, as they were returning from a parting visit to Mary Sinclair and her mother—"surely, you need not now wish me to pity Evelyn, since he has been so soon consoled. His love for me could never have been very deep."

"I am not sure of that," rejoined Susan; "human feeling cannot always be estimated by human conduct; and you must remember, that we are not the only persons who listen to reports, which may have entirely altered his motives and actions. You know how exalted are his principles; and if, as I have been told, the affection of Miss Somerville for him was such as to injure her health, he may have yielded to the hope of making her a good husband, and strengthened the necessity under which he now feels himself bound to forget you."—Susan drew a deep sigh—Margaret laughed nervously—"Never again will I believe lovers' vows——"

"Never?" inquired Susan. "I think, Margaret, you do not know yourself. I trust you will not have cause to doubt those from him whose love you may return."

"Well," rejoined Margaret, "I am sure, at least, of knowing you to be the dearest and best of sisters; you will guide and help me not to act as foolishly as my wild nature might lead me to do. Do you know, I was so absurd as to feel a little mortified, when I heard of her love for Evelyn: but he is such a good creature, and I hope that they will be happy. I wish our dear Eric's kind disposition were aided by that stability of principle which guides him in all he does. Do you know, Susan," added she, laughing, "I think *you* should marry Mr. Hamilton, because you could lead him in the right way; and *I* should have been advised by Evelyn, who would have acted as ballast to my sail, as Mr. Richardson would say."

It was well that the veil which hung over the countenance of Susan prevented her reading the emotion which it betrayed; for she had turned inquiringly towards her, as she uttered the last sentence. As it was, she continued heedlessly to wound those feelings which she did not perceive, until, joining their father, the conversation took another turn, and they proceeded homeward.

A few days after, the preparations were concluded, and General Falkland and his daughters on their way to London.

"Farewell, my dears," said the gruff voice of Mrs. Stewart, who had hastened, on the news of their projected journey, to bid Susan and her sister adieu. "Take care of yourselves, and wear thick shoes, and do not let any foolish vanity hinder you clothing yourselves well; it is wonderful how foolish young people will be," added she, still muttering to herself, as the carriage door was closing, and her uncle, Mr. Lazenby, was pouring forth his promises that his works should be concluded in two months, and that the General and his daughters, and all their friends, should have the most numerous and splendidly bound copies.

"God bless those dear girls!" said Mrs. Stewart, as they departed, while a tear rolled down her hard cheeks, and woman's softness for a moment beautified her usually morose-looking countenance. "Next to my dear Willy and Alexander, I love them more dearly than any one." "Fine girls—clever girls," said Mr. Lazenby, as he shouldered three large volumes of reference, which he had borrowed from the General's library, with which to enrich his theory, and stepped sedately behind the quicker pace of his niece, who usually arrived, at least, a mile's walk before him.

Good roads, four horses, and convenient inns, are sad drawbacks to those who love adventure; and there are few of such, who can contrive to meet with much that is amusing, who thus travel to the great city, to which numbers are daily hurrying in the same manner—some so occupied with mercenary business, that they have little leisure to expect romantic adventure, or to regret the want of it; some so engrossed with ambitious speculation, and their minds so much bent on their machinations, as wholly to overlook those passing scenes which might interest lovers of nature, or engage others, who see in all things, and in all persons, somewhat

to please or amuse; some wholly given to the pursuit of pleasure, who blame the tardiness of the fleetest steeds, while hurrying to the great mart of dissipation; a few, haply, so engrossed by an all-consuming passion, that the present moment is lost in remembrance of the past, or in anticipation of that future which shall restore them to the object of their heart's desire:—none of those possessed the serene mind of General Falkland; to him every town and village through which they passed seemed an object of interest, as he considered the number of human souls who inhabited them, with their cares, and sorrows, and joys, all hastening on to that end from which there is no receding, and on which so few seem to have leisure to meditate. The lonely church, with its accompanying burial-ground, filled with the records of man's mortality—the solitary cottage, with its neat garden, in which the laborer stopped for a moment to gaze at, and perhaps to envy, the passing vehicle, and those it contained—the wandering pedlar, resting his burden upon the milestone, while eating his morsel—the blind beggar, with his faithful dog, or the poor widow hastening to visit her distant child, with tottering and feeble steps, these, and every other object connected with human interest, had power to engage his mind in useful and benevolent musing, when the scenery was not such as to arrest the attention of so genuine a lover of nature as himself. Occasionally his daughters read aloud to him; but their thoughts often wandered to their heart's interests, when he closed his eyes in sleep as evening came on, and they continued their journey in silence. Susan endeavored to rejoice in her sister's happiness; while Margaret, ignorant of her cares, hoped that her anxiety might, at least, be sooner terminated than her own.

The dusty loaded carriage drove through the park just at the hour when fashion brings such flowing numbers to its crowded ring, and many were the salu-

tations they received, as they passed to General Falkland's house.

"How gloomy a London house appears!" said Margaret, throwing herself at her father's feet, as he stretched himself on an ottoman in the lower drawing-room; "I almost wish myself back again at Walrond," added she; "don't you, dear papa?"

"No, love," replied the General, smiling; "and I think you will not long think so either," added he, as the porter put into his hands numerous visiting cards, and notes of invitation, which had poured in from the moment the cleaning of the windows, and the bustle of the upholsterers and glaziers, and other signs of preparations, had announced the prospect of their arrival to an idle crowd. "Here are three balls, and one concert, and more parties awaiting you;—what says my Margaret to these?"

"I say, dear father, that I shall not enjoy one of them so much as Mary's wedding feast;—but let me pull up those blinds, and throw a little light into this dingy saloon."

So saying, she hastened to the arrangement of the furniture, which, according to the taste of their domestics, was placed in formal array around the chamber; and while thus engaged, Lord de Tracey was announced. Susan entered at the same moment; a blush rose on her cheek, which increased the joyful agitation of her lover. "I have not been long in assailing your door, General. I met Elliott in Piccadilly, who told me he had seen your carriage, and I hoped you would not refuse to admit me for a moment; but I will not bore you long with my presence, for you must be dreadfully tired. I trust," added he, with a tenderer tone to Susan, "that you have not suffered from your journey."

Susan's reply was interrupted by the General begging that Lord de Tracey would stay and dine with them. "We shall have our mutton chop, and then

go to bed ; pray stay and enliven us a little, for Margaret thinks London so dull, she already wishes to return."

"Could I possibly assist in detaining her from such a proceeding," said Lord de Tracey, smiling, and fixing his eyes on Susan, "I should, indeed, deem myself happy ; but I have, alas, a stupid dinner engagement."

"Oh, never mind," said the General, "you will be in time for a London dinner, should you stay to eat with us." The matter was easily decided, and Lord de Tracey remained.

It was a relief to Susan, when he was obliged to retire early to make his toilette for the fulfilment of his engagement ; for, wearied as she was in body, she felt little able for exertion, and Lord de Tracey's were not a little lessened, by observing the listless manner in which she replied to his observations, and by the animation which she could not conceal, when, in answer to General Falkland's inquiry, he spoke of Mr. Hamilton. His suspicions concerning her attachment for him were again awakened ; but he consoled himself by thinking, that at any rate Margaret was the object of his attachment. He made her happy, by whispering that Hamilton had appeared the picture of wretchedness, until the day when he had heard of their intended arrival. He rallied her a little on the report which, he said, had become so general in town, that he hoped he might soon be permitted to give her joy on her approaching happiness. "Quite a steady fellow now," added he, "quite domestic." So saying, he shook her hand, and departed ; and Margaret proceeded to conceal her confusion by the most voluble expressions in favor of their late guest : so agreeable—so perfectly elegant in his manner—so good looking. Her father smiled. "I do not know Margaret, what he whispered to you ; but the result is

in his favor, and he certainly deserves your admiration. Does he not, Susan?"

"Oh, yes," she replied, scarcely knowing what she said; but letters and parcels were placed before them, and the arrangements which their arrival required came to her relief, and they were soon on their way to repose.

Next morning they were assailed by dress makers and milliners, who, no sooner had they gained admittance, than they strewed the sofas and chairs with the contents of their wicker baskets, declaring, that what they possessed of apparel, looked as if it came out of Noah's ark,—holding up hats, caps, and dresses innumerable, for their observation, and detaining them for hours on subjects which could not but appear insignificant to those whose native beauty had, perhaps, made them more indifferent to dress, than others of the same sex and age. There is something in acknowledged beauty defies vanity, as much as real greatness defies pride; and there were few of the many young ladies who entered that year on their career of gaiety, who were less occupied than were Susan and Margaret concerning that all-important subject to most women—dress; and yet there were few who obtained so much of the admiration of one sex, and the envy of the other. Visits and invitations crowded upon them; and though others would have told their fashionable acquaintance that "they had not seen a soul—that they had been no where—that they never saw so dull a season—and that there was positively nothing to do,"—and similar expressions of fashionable nonsense, daily pronounced by those who spend their mornings in crowds, and their nights at balls,—the Miss Falklands considered themselves very dissipated, when, after a fortnight's sojourn in town, they had heard Pasta once, and had returned one morning from a ball, between one and two, given by Lady Sherbourne, and at which the presence of Hamilton was the inducement

to both sisters, thus to prolong the hours of gaiety till they each regretted it—from different motives, but with the same result, for each was grieved and disappointed: and well can those sympathise with their feelings, who have known what it is, amidst a crowd of indifferent persons, to single the object of their preference, with wearying anxiety; to be interrupted by the careless voice of fashionable *betise*, uttering some phrase of indifference to equally careless ears, but to which courtesy claims a reply; then to turn for the one sought after, and see that one engaged, as if with the deepest interest, with another, with whom, perhaps, they are as little amused as the being who envies them; and to find, at the conclusion of an evening which had begun with hope and joy, that both mind and body, uselessly excited, now sink with regret and exhaustion, when, in the solitude of home, no other sound is heard but the rumbling of carriages returning from the same attempt at pleasure, no other remembrance remains but those attended by disappointment and vexation, while the false excitement lingers as a bird of prey around the spirit, and impedes the collectedness of thought which those sigh for, who have been from childhood accustomed to conclude their day with meditation and prayer.

To those whose fate has led them from their earliest years into scenes of worldly amusement, and from which it may appear impossible to withdraw, there may not be the same danger of forgetfulness; for custom has deprived them of that measure of excitement, which enthral the spirits of such as have led a country life: but these will be struck, on a renewed entrance into the world, by the sense of the *entrainement* which it produces; and where reason and real religion, have hitherto actuated the heart and conscience, there will be a redoubled necessity imposed upon them, by the knowledge of their weakness, to watchfulness in such an hour of temptation.

It had been well for poor Eric Hamilton, had he sought, in his hours of loneliness, that strength, which alone could have fortified his mind against the snares which beset him, and which, meeting him in moments of one disappointed passion, stimulated him to the pursuit of another, which had already consumed too much of his time and his talents, and which was fatally regaining its baneful ascendancy over him.

Lord de Tracey's constant intimacy with Susan, and the daily reports which this intimacy occasioned, added to the apparent satisfaction which his attentions gave to the Falkland family, combined to fill the mind of Hamilton with despair of ever renewing those hopes, which had once so far beneficially influenced him, as to restrain him from pursuits into which he again found himself involved. Whenever he visited General Falkland of a morning, he found his daughters surrounded by a train of admirers. Lord de Tracey was ever amongst them, and seemed to claim his post beside Susan, as his right: riding or walking, still his dreaded rival was there, to impede his approach, or to fill him with mortification, by evincing that calm satisfaction and security, in the seeming possession of that favor which he most envied. True it was, that Margaret was ever ready to greet him with her accustomed smile, and that in her society he might well feel, as he had ever done, that he was the friend and companion of their youthful days; but his passion for her sister blinded his eyes to those charms which shone yet more brightly when his presence lent a sweeter lustre to her expressive face, and added an endearing softness to her playful manner: and while she spake to him in those witching tones, which had filled many a heart with bliss, and which love alone can harmonize, he was listening to the cold replies which fell from the lips of Susan, and watching her placid movements, as she strove when in his company to assume an indifference which she could not feel; but which he believed

to be genuine—Then would he bitterly reproach himself for loving so fervently one who returned his affection with so much apathy, and inveighing inwardly against her cold, heartless manner, he would repair to the gaming table, and endeavor by this false and baneful excitement to banish reflection; but it was in vain. Again he awoke to agonizing regrets, but not to repentance—amiable as was his natural disposition, the want of solid principle impaired a character which might have been under other guidance, not only brilliant, but valuable; and day after day returned, and still found him the prey of those contending passions which, by their very nature, seemed only to harass and disappoint him.

Among those who had sufficient penetration to see through the general mistake which prevailed as to the object of his love, was Mr. Elliott, who failed not, for his own purposes, to make use of his discernment to the further detriment of the unfortunate young man.

Mr. Elliott had begun by entertaining no other feeling for Susan than a wish to be on an amicable footing with her, because she was the fashion, and because he liked to prove to the world that he was one of her most favored followers: but her society proved dangerous even to his heart, worn out and blazé as his feelings had become by a life of constant intercourse with the gay and dissipated world, and when he found his attentions were disregarded, and that his disposition was too well known to be admired by her whom he had wearied by his fulsome flatteries, and unpleasant attentions, the love such as he was capable of entertaining was soon converted into hatred; and though he ceased not to be a daily visiter at the house of General Falkland; and though he would not relinquish his original object of being considered as a favored swain of Susan's; his chief concern, in seeking her society, was now to impede the possibility of her ever enjoying the society of him to whom she was so devotedly attached.

Often, when wearied and disgusted with his mode of life, Eric Hamilton would, on no higher principle than that of dislike of the effects of dissipation, have retired home in preference to repairing as usual to the gaming-table, Mr. Elliott would contrive to insinuate into his mind the delightful excitement which he lost by so doing, and persuade him to accompany him to these haunts of degradation; afterwards would he, in presence of General Falkland, relate the losses of his unfortunate young friend, as he called him, and lament that he should thus squander the remains of a shattered fortune. Mr. Elliott gained nothing by this baseness but the contempt of Susan, and the dislike of her sister, who could not but imagine they discerned the motive of Mr. Elliott by these ungenerous tales against one whom he called his friend. But it served as a renewed warning to General Falkland, to guard against the two frequent intercourse of his daughters with Mr. Hamilton; and entertaining, as he did, the highest opinion of Lord de Tracey, he was more than ever desirous that the suit which he preferred with so much perseverance should be favored by his dear Susan.

CHAPTER XV.

"It may be thou art entered into the cloud which will bring a gentle shower to refresh thy sorrows."

J. TAYLOR.

ONE morning, when Susan had remained longer than usual alone in her chamber, she was aroused from the sorrowful meditation in which she was engaged by her sister's entrance. Margaret's spirits, once so gay and lively, had of late been deeply depressed, not only by Eric Hamilton's altered manner, but by the reports which Mr. Elliott had so successfully contrived to circulate, that many spoke to her on the subject, to whom she would have thought it treason to breath one word in censure about the beloved of her heart. She felt the trial, painfully and more deeply when the warning voice of her revered father pointed out the danger of a woman's fixing her affections on a gamester. Such counsel, however, he was wont to bestow in general terms, for he deemed it best not to wound the feelings of either party by seeming to guess the truth, while he endeavored to avert the baneful effects of this unfortunate attachment so as best to promote their ultimate happiness.

Susan rejoiced to hear the gay tone of voice of Margaret, so much more like that of former days than she had done since their arrival in town, as she called her to hasten down stairs to enjoy a pleasure which awaited her.

"What is it, dear Margaret?" inquired she, "anything will please me that makes you look more like yourself than you have done of late."

"Well, I must tell you, rejoined Margaret, though I meant to give you a surprize. Our dear Mr. Mont-

gomery has just returned from the country, and he is looking quite fresh and young, and so happy to see us again ; I have left him with papa, busily engaged in conversation over a projected portrait which he is going to make of us—so you must put on your best smiles to welcome the dear old man.”

Susan hastened to follow her sister—Mr. Montgomery was not only a man whose genius and talent had rendered him an acceptable guest to those able to appreciate talent and worth, but one of the oldest friends of General Falkland—one for whom he entertained the highest regard, and whose character could be fully appreciated by those alone who knew him as intimately and as well as they did. Born of humble parents, Mr. Montgomery had entered life in a sphere totally different from that to which his talent had introduced him ; but, gifted with a mind far above his situation, he was at an early age the friend and companion of many persons of exalted condition in rank as well as of mind. And although he still retained the simplicity and even abruptness of his nature, he was able to appreciate the innate distinctions of manner in those with whom he associated, as well as the motives which actuated their conduct. An early disappointment had somewhat soured a naturally harsh temper, and lent a degree of moroseness to his manner when in the society of those who did not please him ; but with the General and his lovely daughters, this gave way to a friendly freedom and a degree of pleasantry, which, from the originality of its nature, served to enhance the pleasure which they took in the enjoyment of his company.

When the first salutations were over, which lasted a considerable time—for he did not wish to relinquish the white hand which his large bony grasp shook repeatedly, while his small grey eyes glistened with pleasure on the lovely face of Susan—he whispered to her father, “More beautiful than ever, General :”

and then aloud, "what are you doing here, ladies, wasting your bloom in this smoky town—I'm sure ye would be better employed at Walrond, and ye would certainly make a better picture there among the heather and the broom. Oh, I weary to tread the moors again."

"And why don't you?" enquired Margaret; "your room has been ready these two years, and a quiet pony awaiting you in papa's stable—and you never come."

Mr. Montgomery gave something between a sigh and a groan; then, in a voice in which sorrow and crossness seemed to contend, said, "I can't get away—they won't let me away, and if they did I should not go."

"Oh, but we will take you with us," said Margaret, laughing, and throwing her scarf playfully around him; "see you are a prisoner now. Papa, claim his promise."

"We shall talk of that hereafter, love," rejoined the General, who thought that Mr. Montgomery's friendship was scarcely at that moment proof against the instability of his temper, which he remarked at that moment, though he knew not the cause. "But pray, my dear friend, let us fix a day for my daughters' first sitting."

"Let me see," said Mr. Montgomery, counting on his fingers, "to-morrow I shall be engaged all day with those vile carpenters, who never do as they are bid, except I stand over them—Wednesday I have given a promise to Lord B——, and I cannot break my word;—Thursday?—Yes!—Thursday at eleven o'clock;—remember, ladies, you are in time," said he, while his face again relaxed into a smile, as he gazed on the beautiful girls before him, and as his mind reverted to the position in which they were placed, as being favorable to his picture. "There, now—so," said he; "that would do very well—but

none of those fashionable frills or tippets, or what do you call them—just made to disfigure people,” added he, as his broad Scotch acquired a yet severer accent, and his energy increased; “I never saw such hideous things as those French milliners make up for the disfigurement of women: it is just deplorable.”

As he continued to inveigh against fashion, and to enlarge on flowing draperies, &c., Mr. Hamilton was announced—he rose hastily and in apparent confusion.

“Oh! don’t go—don’t go!” said every voice at once; and Margaret took his arm to detain him. He still advanced towards the door, and, as he did so, Mr. Hamilton passed him—a flush spread over his withered cheek, and he turned to gaze at the handsome figure which was bending to salute General Falkland as he sat on his couch.

“Who’s that?” said he, in a low tone to Margaret; “surely I heard;” and he frowned morosely.

“Mr. Hamilton,” rejoined she, and, as she spoke the blood mantled in her cheek.

“Beware of the name,” said Mr. Montgomery, pressing her hand; and before she could recover from her astonishment, he was gone.

“What an odd looking old fellow,” said Eric; “truly I may say, in Burns’ language, he glowered at me, as if he had seen a warlock.”

“He is an old friend of mine,” replied the General. “A Scotch painter, whom I have known for these thirty years, and am therefore, acquainted with his worth, and accustomed to his oddities; but he certainly does not inspire every one with the same liking—his temper has been soured by many vexations and disappointments, and he has too little regard to outward appearance to conceal that which he has not sufficient philosophy to repress—namely a distrust of every person, with whom he is not thoroughly acquainted—I could wish my friend entertained a more amiable view of human nature.”

"And I, also," rejoined Eric, bitterly, "though there is enough in the world to disgust a man from confiding in any one. I hear that my *friend* Elliott is among those who take every possible care to abuse me to every one who names me—but he shall answer for it. By Heavens!" continued he impetuously, "could but I ascertain that to be true I have just heard, I would—"

"Softly," said General Falkland, laying his hand on his arm, "you forget the the presence of ladies—you forget that—"

"I beg a thousand pardons," said Hamilton, endeavoring to laugh; and to convert into a joke that which it was quite apparent was none in reality—"but really that old man cast such an evil eye on me that it elicited all the fire which I had intended to suppress in such society. Have you heard," said he, turning to Margaret, and anxious now to change the subject—"have you heard of the great concert which is to take place next Saturday morning, for the benefit of some hospital—I forget what for? You know these charities of life are not my province; but here are the cards which will tell about all it. Lady Sherbourne filled my pockets with them, when she heard I intended calling upon you, and begged that I would ask you all to go, and here is a large parcel for your friends."

"Oh! I should be delighted," said Margaret, "if Papa has no objection."

"None in the world," said General Falkland; and Margaret's eye glistened with anticipated pleasure, and Susan sighed; for her's met those of Eric Hamilton, and he looked sadly as he enquired whether she also would attend, and put a card into her hand, with an expressive smile of bitterness, adding, "I have no doubt, you can dispose of one at least for a *charity*." So saying, he rose to depart, for at that moment Lord de Tracey and Baron Dompfel entered the room—Margaret was elated—she forgot Mr. Montgomery's

warning, nor did it recur to her till she lay down that night to rest: but she thought she had seen more kindness in Eric Hamilton's manner than she had done since they had met in London; and with the pleasure which awaited her, and with that excitement which she felt after conversing with him, she received the guests with more than usual spirit, and hastened to comply with Baron Dompfel's request that she would accompany him with her voice, while he sang and played some new German Duetts.

In the meantime General Falkland's engagement with his book left Lord de Tracey and Susan to a tête-a-tête, which he failed not to profit by, by urging his suit more fervently than he had ever before done—Poor Susan, enfeebled by agitation, was melted to tears, and forced to leave the room; but, she had not entirely rejected him, and Lord de Tracey soon retired full of hope, and more desirous than ever to obtain a hand so long sought, but which, with all his worldly advantages, he felt himself so little worthy to gain. His was not the refinement of feeling to shrink from the pursuit of one whose affections were pre-engaged. He was not ignorant of her preference for Mr. Hamilton, although so careful was she to conceal it, that at times he doubted, as he wished to do, that there was any foundation for his suspicions. Aware of the influence which her father held over the mind of Susan, and of the eminence on which he stood in his opinion, Lord de Tracey hastened home to address General Falkland, with a letter full of the most ardent expressions of devotion for his daughter; and entreating him to exert his influence in his favor. Then followed protestations of eternal devotedness to her every interest—of undivided attention to her every care, and all the eloquence which a passionate lover knows how to use—it was her eyes he intended should peruse a letter thus addressed by way of prov-

ing how much he dreaded her disdain, while at the same time he apprehended it.

For some days after Lord de Tracey's visit, Susan's indisposition prevented her leaving the house. It was the effect of constant agitation, which thus renewed her disorder; and, again Général Falkland and Margaret were condemned to endure all the anxiety which they had before experienced, on her account; from this attack however she rallied, and when the day came on which they had settled to sit for their portraits, to Mr. Montgomery, she was sufficiently recovered to permit Margaret to absent herself to fulfil her engagement.

It was a dim yellow morning, such as is often seen in London, even in summer; but Margaret, who had been for some days confined to the house, preferred walking, and, accompanied by her maid, she set out for Mr. Montgomery's house.

It was about half an hour previous to that which he had named that she arrived at Mr. Montgomery's door; for, partly through difference of watches, partly through fear of offending him by being too late, Margaret had hurried her steps with more than ordinary speed—the door was opened by a dirty looking housemaid, who stood irresolute whether to admit visitors at any hour which her punctual master had not led her to expect. Margaret, however, assured her she came by appointment, and was ushered into a small dark room on the ground floor, where she had ample leisure for her own reflections; as Mr. Montgomery did not appear till the clock struck eleven, according to his directions—and truly the scene was by no means a pleasant one, for she had some scruples as to placing herself on one of the horse-hair chairs, four of which were placed in a row on one side, while something which pretended to be a sofa of the same materials, thickly encrusted with dust, adorned the opposite end, and a very dirty grate filled with

cut paper answered to the door by which she had entered.

Had she indulged any curiosity as to what was passing in the street, to which the windows looked, she would have found it impossible to gratify such a wish, the under casement being shaded by some very dirty olive green blinds, and the upper so deeply encrusted with the mingled dust and soot of years, that scarcely sufficient transparency remained to admit a small portion of the dim yellow light which shines in a dull morning in London—at length however, the slide of a pair of down-at-heel slippers was heard echoing through the dark gloomy passage, the door opened, and Mr. Montgomery stood before her.—One of his frowns stood on his brow, a frown which Margaret well understood, for she had often seen, and knew how to avert it, by never thwarting him till she had persuaded him into an explanation of the cause of his displeasure, when it immediately vanished.

“The room is ready for you *now*,” said he putting a marked emphasis on the one word *now*.

“I fear,” said Margaret, “my unusually early knock disturbed you, but I do not care how long I wait.”

“No,” rejoined Mr. Montgomery, “some folks have nothing to do—but take pleasure jaunts—It’s no wonder if they’re in time. Take care,” continued he, as Margaret prepared to follow him through the dark passage which led to his study, and which was considerably impeded by pictures—frames—old carved chairs, and sundry other cumbrous articles, heaped in confusion on either side.—“Take care that you do not hurt yourself, or, may be, spoil some of my pictures—I have been intending daily to get these things put out of the way; but I cannot let my servant touch them, she’s so stupid she does not yet know the difference between a picture and a looking-glass—Look here,” continued he, opening the door of his study, and lifting a drawing, which since its accident had

been turned out in disgrace. "Look how she destroyed this for me; I gave her the key of my study one morning, that she might fetch me my specs—and she took that opportunity of setting my table to rights, as she called it—Turned all my things topsey turvey, and ended by dusting my drawing, which was within a few strokes of being completed.

Margaret was glad to find that Mr. Montgomery's wrath was venting itself on the housemaid, and continued to repeat "How provoking! how distressing," till she was interrupted by her cross old friend saying "Where is your sister? what's the use of one of you without the other? but I suppose *she'll* come an hour *after* her time." Margaret acquainted him with her sister's illness, and in a moment Mr. Montgomery forgot all his grievances. "Ill, did you say?" said he, his thin face becoming more drawn and pale as he shook his head. "I doubt, my dear, whether you are not as bad as she is—It is my opinion," drawing himself closer to Margaret, and taking her hand, with that kindness which his words sometimes belied—It's my opinion that you're both ill, and of the same complaint. I've heard more than you would suppose I could who scarcely stir from the enclosure of these four walls—and I wish to heaven I had not heard it, or rather that there was no truth in it."

"What can you mean?" said Margaret, nervously, her thoughts reverting to the strange warning he had given her, as he quitted her when she last saw him—"Tell me, my dear Mr. Montgomery what you mean, and why," added she, blushing crimson, "why you uttered such strange words the other day."

"I have, may be, better reasons than you can guess, my dear, for doing so; but now I will just take a look at you, since you are here, though I doubt I cannot do much good to-day. When a man's put out of his way," continued he, with a peculiar expression of ill-humor, which Margaret felt was directed towards herself—

“ When a man’s put out of his way in the morning, he’s unfitted for work all day ;” so saying, he proceeded to lay hold of his gigantic easel with each hand, and to pull it across the uncarpeted floor, as if uncertain when or where it was to rest, till the grating sound echoed through the lofty apartment with no pleasing effect.

Margaret looked around her on the curious arrangement, or rather disorder, of this old man’s study. Around the walls were placed numerous pictures, some finished, some in progress, all placed with their canvass and wooden backs to view ; for Mr. Montgomery dreaded above all things that ignorant eyes should behold his works in his presence, well aware that his temper could not brook to hear their observations—and wo to any one whose curiosity should tempt him to turn them. No apology could counteract the effect of so much presumption, or avert the storm which was sure to follow.

A lily figure, covered with an old chintz curtain, stood in death-like stillness in one corner, and reflected its unsightly face and form in a long pier-glass opposite, on the frame of which were suspended a green shade for the artist’s eyes, bearing marks of many years’ faithful service, and an old drab great coat. One very dirty table was covered with brushes of every size and dimension, together with a huge bundle of rags. On another was placed a large set pallet, with three or four pair of spectacles and a black mirror in a solid case. The only chair intended for general use was occupied by Margaret’s bonnet and shawl, which promised no brighter re-appearance from the thick lair of dust in which their new situation had placed them. A wooden platform, on which was placed a large arm-chair, with gilt frame and crimson silk cushion, completed the furniture of this strange-looking apartment, and on this Margaret was at length desired to seat herself, when Mr. Montgomery, seizing

a large piece of chalk, seemed to have satisfied himself as to the position of sitter and easel, and retiring at a considerable distance, frowned upon Margaret, as if he entertained some far more sinister design than that of portraying features to which it would have been difficult to have added a sweeter expression than her's possessed.

"There now," said he, as he advanced with hasty step to the canvass, and hastily sketched some wonderfully powerful lines, tracing, with a genius such as few are master of, an elegant outline of her face and hair. "Why can't ye always let your hair hang as it does now, and not comb and scrape it up to the top of your head as if you had none." The damp of the morning, and the removal of the bonnet, had somewhat lessened the original order with which she had prepared the hair, and Margaret expressed herself obliged to these for having met his taste better than she could have done.

"Ah! there was but one who never appeared otherwise than as she ought to have done for a picture," said Mr. Montgomery, leaning on the stick on which he had rested his hand for drawing, and looking up in Margaret's face with a melancholy countenance—"but she is in her grave now, and it is well for me that she is—and it had been better for me had I never seen her."

"I wish, dear Mr. Montgomery," said Margaret, rising, and forgetting all the injunctions she had received not to stir from her original position; "I wish you would not think me intrusive, were I to request you to fulfil your long given promise, to acquaint me concerning one for whom I entertain the liveliest interest, because I am sure that it is on her account that——"

"That what?" rejoined Mr. Montgomery. "That I have made an old fool of myself, and that you have completely spoiled my sketch by moving," said he,

brushing a tear from his eye, and, returning to the canvass before him, he brushed out all he had done in a moment.

"A thousand, thousand pardons," said Margaret, hastily returning to her seat, and replacing herself as she thought exactly in the same attitude as before.

"Hoot! said Mr. Montgomery, "do you think yon stiff gait will serve my turn? Na; na; I ken brawly what will keep you quiet; think of one I saw in your father's house, last week, and ye'll do well enough."

It was a pity that Mr. Montgomery had not left his sketch as he begun it, for the color which mounted to her forehead, and the ineffable expression of reproachful kindness, mingled with a dearer emotion, had rendered his portrait one of invaluable interest: but he continued,

"Forgive me, my dear lady, forgive the fancies of a man who has been soured by disappointment, broken down with sorrow, rendered hateful by the want of sympathy—and hateful from feeling the want of it. Forgive me, dear lady, I am an ungrateful, a heartless wretch!" so saying, he dropped his pencil and stick, and sank down on the chair beside him.

"Do not say so," said Margaret, now rising without fear of reproach; "when you are able, tell me your griefs, and you shall not want sympathy—nay, you do not want it now, be assured."

"The day is passed," said Mr. Montgomery, resuming his composure, "long past, since even your kindness could avail me any thing; but it is a comfort—it is a consolation—to claim your sympathy, and, since I have opened the subject, I will not dismiss it till you know all. Sit down, my dear," said he, looking round for a chair, but in vain. "I never have but one chair for myself, and one for my sitter," said he, in his usual tone of ill-humor, "or else there would be no end of all folks' friends coming in with them to hover about what they know nothing of; but I am sorry you should thus kneel on this dirty floor."

"Oh never mind that," said Margaret, as, totally regardless of her garments, she crouched at the old man's feet amid the relics of dust, paint, and turpentine, forgetful of all but the desire of hearing what Mr. Montgomery had to tell her.

"Well then, my dear," continued he, "what like is that young man—that Hamilton—I saw at your house the other day?"

Margaret started; it was a curious introduction, she thought, to his own history, and the question puzzled her; "Oh, you saw him," said she, bending her eyes upon the ground.

"Yes, I *saw* him, and he is very like—too like—. I have never closed an eye since the day I met him."

"Like whom?" inquired Margaret, breathlessly.

"Like his mother!—like my young—my beautiful—my betrothed; like her who wronged—like her who deserted me for one whose name he bears—whose name I hate. And I fear, my dear young lady—I fear for you—for your sister's sake, that in character he is too like his father."

"For my sake!—for my sister's!! What can you mean?" said Margaret.

"Yes," said Mr. Montgomery, with increased warmth, "I know all—I know that you love him; I know that your sister is engaged, or will shortly be engaged to one to whom she will give her hand without her heart. Beware, beware of breaking that sister's heart whom you love so well—beware of indulging an affection for one who returns it not. I speak harshly to your ears, but it is for your welfare, believe me."

Margaret remained stupified with astonishment. A thousand conflicting thoughts—a thousand remembrances of circumstances which once appeared in so different a light—now stood before her in all their heart-rending reality. Scarcely yet could she be undeceived; the hopes, the joys of years were about to be torn

from her ; but they were the hopes and joys of youth's deceitful dream : and the sad truth, which time must inevitably discover, was thus at once abruptly revealed, though not entirely believed.

"I was once, as you have been," continued Mr. Montgomery, "elated with that most dear, most precious hope, the thought of being truly and faithfully beloved by one who had been the companion of my earliest years, the partner of my infant joys and sorrows, the sharer of my every hour of pleasure, the sympathizing solace of my cares. At length the affection, which grew into passion, revealed my love for her ; it was mutual, and she promised me her heart and hand, with all the blushing loveliness of innocence and truth. We parted, and, in the mean time, Mr. Hamilton's father, a young and handsome man, gifted with worldly advantages far superior to any I had to boast, became a frequent visiter at her mother's house. She broke her faith to me, and married him. But how was she rewarded ? Disappointment in the object of her choice followed. He became disgusted with the quiet life she loved, ran into folly and dissipation, and broke her heart. She died of a rapid consumption, a few months after the birth of her only son ; and her husband's wild and thoughtless career was soon put an end to by death. You know the rest—you know how the early life of the descendant of such parents has been spent ; you can tell of the fascination of that young man's appearance and manners ; you are aware also of his defects, but you know not that he has won your sister's heart, as well as yours ;—you know not that that heart is breaking in secret, or that she will carry on, as I am doing, the lengthened chain of existence with lingering decay of spirit, such as no time can change—no earthly power can renovate."

As he finished his sentence, Margaret's head sunk upon his knee, her eyes closed, and, when he strove to rouse her, he found that she had fainted. Placing her

gently as he could upon the chair, he ran for water, and in a few moments, she revived.

"I have heard all," she said, with a calmness which filled his honest heart with admiration, till the tears gushed from his eyes and streamed upon his furrowed cheek; "I have heard all; and, though little prepared for such a trial, I trust in God I shall meet it as I ought, for I have deserved it. Hear me, my revered friend, I intreat you. Do not betray the emotion I have shown: I shall also henceforth conceal, as she has done so long, so nobly, her heart's grief. He shall be hers; nor shall I suffer one selfish regret to mingle with my rejoicing in her happiness. Now every difficulty is removed: now is every doubt solved. Sweet angelic girl! how long has she borne with me. But it shall be thus no longer—I will speak to Eric Hamilton myself. Surely the affection of such a being will stimulate him to virtuous enterprise, and reclaim him from that which the consciousness of my unworthy love has failed in doing. How vain! how foolish—how blind I have been. What must he think of me?" Tears choked her utterance, and Mr. Montgomery wept with her.

"You are as good and as sweet a girl as I ever knew," he said; "but you must endeavor to compose yourself, while I tell you how I have become entirely acquainted with all I have to say to you. The day after I met him at your house, I received a note in a handwriting which I had never seen before; I looked at the signature, and found it to be 'Eric Hamilton.' I was about to cast the letter away in a rage, such as I grieve to say I often give way to: but something restrained me. He asked for an interview with me, and I granted it. Our conversation proved one of deep and mournful interest to me. He made me, stranger as I was to him, the confidant of his cares. He said he knew my circumstances and my character, and that there was not on earth a living creature to whom he

would thus intrust his secret but to me. He intreated me to paint for him a portrait of Susan—he spoke not of you. But you had unwittingly betrayed yourself. I knew all—I could not make him the promise he wished; but he seized a sketch I had done of her long ago, which lay on my table up-stairs, where we were speaking, and, ere I could persuade him to return it, rushed out of the room like a mad-man.”

“Thank you, thank you, dear Mr. Montgomery!” said Margaret, pressing his hand; “thank God he does not know the extent of my weakness,—and she may yet be happy. I am impatient to be with her, but I fear I am unable to walk. Will you be kind enough to bid my servant call a hackney-coach for me? and I will go home immediately.”

Mr. Montgomery hastened to obey her, and drawing off his pepper-and-salt working-dress, he quickly exchanged it for his coat, and was soon handing Margaret into a coach, into which he followed her.

“But what shall I say to my father—my dear father?” said Margaret.

“The truth, my dear!” said Mr. Montgomery, solemnly. “Have no concealments from a parent,—and such a parent. Tell him all,—or I will tell him. All he seeks is your happiness; and you both need his counsel.”

As he spoke, the coach stopped at General Falkland’s door; the steps were let down—the door opened. Margaret’s arm touched one who was coming down the steps of the house. It was Eric Hamilton.

“Stay!” she said, catching by the rails to keep herself from falling—“Stay, I intreat!” but he heard her not. In a few minutes he was seen rapidly turning the corner of the street, and was out of sight.

CHAPTER XVI.

“Ah! sans doute ce n'est pas l'amour que l'éternité peut être comprise. Il confond toutes les notions de tems : il efface les idées de commencement et de fin : on croit avoir toujours aimé l'objet qu'on aime tant il est difficile de concevoir qu'on ait pu vivre sans lui. Plus la separation est affreuse moins elle paroît vraisemblable : elle devient comme la mort une crainte dont on *parle plus, qu'on n'y croit* : un avenir qui semble impossible alors même qu'on *scait* qu'il est inevitable.”

MADAME de STEAL.

ABOUT half an hour after Margaret left her father's house for that of the painter's, a cabriolet stopped its furious pace opposite General Falkland's door, and Lord de Tracey, leaping from it, eagerly inquired whether General Falkland were at home? He was told that he was out, riding, and was not expected to return till late in the afternoon, as he had gone some miles out of town.

“Are the young ladies in?” said he breathlessly.

“Yes, Miss Falkland.”—He was admitted.

Lord de Tracey was regarded by the General's household, as he was by the rest of the world, the bridegroom elect of Susan, and the servant thought there could be no objection to *his* admission. He was ushered into the drawing room, but found it vacant. After waiting some time, he sat down and wrote the following words :—

“Do not, I entreat, deny me a few moments' conversation—my life depends upon it!” Then, hastily sealing it, he desired the servant to carry it to Susan.

There are perhaps few so consistent in purpose and in action, who cannot look back on events and periods of their lives wherein they have conducted themselves so as not only to be a wonder to others, but even to themselves. The impetuous and the daring have hesitated and trembled at a time when others would have

imagined *they* could only decide; the cautious and the wary have dashed aside their natural timidity, and boldly rushed where before they would scarcely have trod. Circumstances do at times so influence the bearing of those who deem themselves beyond their power, that they often look back with astonishment at a moment which has defeated the thoughts and projects of years—revealing to the mind its weakness where it had fancied itself most strong, or teaching the thoughtful to distrust all but the virtuous intention, and the aid of Divine Providence to put it into execution.

Long had Susan pondered over the necessity of overcoming an attachment which she believed hopeless, and which, had it been mutual, must have overthrown a beloved sister's dearest hopes. Long had she resolved to endeavor to gratify her father's wishes by accepting Lord de Tracey's offers of marriage, and striving, in fulfilment of duty, to feel for him that devotedness of heart which she had long given to another; but the weakness which her mental and bodily illness had shown her, since the last and most distinct overture from Lord de Tracey, in which she had more realized the agonizing difficulty of the conflict, had almost decided her to reject him, and await the trial which she fancied would not be long in coming to an issue, by her sister's marriage with Mr. Hamilton.

Strange! that, after such a determination, the interview of a few moments should overthrow it! A father's joy—a sister's happiness—the hope of concealing, or at last overcoming, at a distance from them, the ill-fated attachment which she feared she never could hide under the circumstances she anticipated—all conspired to fix her purpose, and Lord de Tracey was accepted.

She told him she could not reward his love as he deserved; but on any terms he besought her not to

withdraw her promise—hoped that his constancy and devotion might some day win that which she could not now bestow, and left her with all the triumph of an accepted lover. As he passed from the room, he met Mr. Hamilton in the vestibule. He took his hand gaily :—

“How are you, my good fellow?—well, I hope, as I am. Well, we are the two happiest fellows in London; aren’t we?”

“I do not know,” said Hamilton, withdrawing his hand with a look of ill-concealed aversion; for he thought he saw a triumph in Lord de Tracey’s eyes which mocked his misery—a misery of which he believed him to be well aware, spite of the world’s rumors; for jealousy is quick in discernment, and he could not be gulled by the voice of idle indifference.

Lord de Tracey left the house, and Hamilton entered the drawing room. He looked around—all was still. He thought there was no one in the apartment, and, leaning his head on the chimney, awaited the expected appearance of Susan. At length, after some minutes, he heard the utterance of a deep-drawn sigh; and the words “God help and strengthen me,” were uttered in a low and solemn tone by the voice of Susan.

“You are not alone,” said Hamilton, advancing towards the sofa on which she reclined, and where she had been hitherto concealed by the high screen which stood before it.

“Hamilton!” she faintly said; then extending her hand to him, she burst into a torrent of tears.

For some moments both were too much agitated to speak. She was the first to break silence.

“I trust,” she said, “when my dear Margaret shall pledge her vows to her future husband, she will not feel as I do now.”

Hamilton heard no more, but, imprinting one impassioned kiss on the cold hand he still grasped convulsively, he rushed from the house, and met Margaret

and Mr. Montgomery, when he was still so overwhelmed with the blow he had just received, that he scarcely knew how he reached his home, in which he shut himself hastily, to indulge in that paroxysm of grief, which, long as he had expected the trial, now burst upon him with a violence uncontrollable, and such as he never had anticipated.

But the full extent of his sufferings was as yet unknown, and he had still to learn not only that his best—his fondest, dream of hope was for ever gone, and that she who had broken the spell was as deeply concerned in his wo as himself, and that Margaret—the gay—the light-hearted Margaret had been deceived for years by him—unwillingly, indeed; but still he had the responsibility of wounding such a being, and long and deeply did he lament it; nor could those passions which had once served to beguile his hours of despondency ever restore his peace of mind. He saw in their indulgence the cause of his misfortunes, but he had yet to learn the only means by which he could regain serenity of mind, or obtain strength to meet those trials which were the just reward of a life spent in thoughtlessness and dissipation.

For some hours he paced his solitary chamber, in all the madness of disappointed love and jealous hatred. A thousand hateful imaginations crowded in his mind, nor did he know how the time passed, till wearied and exhausted, he sank down in a chair, and for the first time, rested his eyes on a heap of unopened letters, which his servant had placed upon the table. One of these was written on a deep-edged mourning paper, and the large black seal attracted his attention. He tore it open. It was from his friend, Evelyn, the present Lord Ormiston. Many were the tears with which he bedewed the generously dictated lines; and deep and heartfelt was his regret on discovering still farther conviction of the long unseen affection which Margaret had cherished for him.

"Noble fellow," said he, aloud; "God bless and reward him. May he live to claim her love! She will not long continue to think of such a wretch as I am. By heavens, I will not stay another moment in this country to blight her happiness with my hateful presence. I will depart—instantly depart for another land. Perhaps the grave may give me rest, for in this world I never can obtain it. I have wrecked my happiness, but that is nothing. But her!—so sweet—so innocent!—that she should suffer for my sake! I cannot bear to think upon it."

He rung the bell violently, gave orders for instant preparation for departure, and, before evening, was on the road to Dover.

When Mr. Montgomery heard from the servant that General Falkland had gone out, he took Margaret's hand, and whispering quickly to her "You will be best alone—I shall return in the evening," hurried away.

Margaret entered the room where Susan was seated. Her eyes were red with weeping, and she feared to alarm her. But Susan, whose emotion had scarcely subsided, dreaded also to vex her sister by betraying it; and having therefore ascertained that it was her, she began, without looking at her, to say

"You have been a long time, Margaret; I hope the picture is coming on well?"

"Oh! do not talk of pictures, my Susan," said Margaret, throwing herself upon her sister's neck; I wish to talk of something else!"

"And so do I, my dearest," replied Susan, whose tears now mingled with those of her sister; "I have also much to tell you, but it may be said in a few words. Margaret, the die is cast. I am irrevocably engaged to Lord de Tracey. Wish me joy," said she, looking up, and striving to force a melancholy smile, though the constraint but served to fill her eyes with new and bitter tears. "Can you not do so? Surely

at such a moment *you* will give me all your sympathy?"

"Yes!—all, indeed," replied her weeping sister, "more—far more than you think I can bestow;—but it must not be for Lord de Tracey's happiness—it must be for yours, my dearest my best beloved Susan. You do not love him, I know it—I know all. Oh! do not give your hand to one from whom you must withhold your love. Write to him—tell him all, or I will do so. Here," said she, hastily seizing the writing-paper which lay before her, and putting it into her sister's cold hand.

For a moment both were silent. Susan was struck with surprise; she could not imagine how her sister should, in one short morning, have made a discovery of that which the observation of years had failed to reveal. The strong temptation which her energetic affection now set before her was all most too powerful for human nature to resist. Yet how could she blight the joy of one so dear, by even appearing to accede to her generous wish—how could she second a proposition which she could not have accepted till aware of the true object of Hamilton's affection, which she *would* not have listened to, were it to destroy, as she deemed it would, Margaret's happiness.

In that moment of silence she summoned to, her aid that grace which teaches to deny self, and when she again spoke, it was not in the language of *assumed* calmness, but with a composure which staggered Margaret's belief in that which she had heard, and which made her unwilling, even for a moment, to impair the prospect of happiness which Susan spoke of as belonging to her union with Lord de Tracey.

"I request, my dear Margaret," said she, kindly folding her sister's hand in both of hers—"I request that this may be the last conversation on this subject—my promise is given—I am already his affianced bride, and time will, I trust, prove me to be his good and faithful wife. My dear father will be so happy when

he knows I have at last acceded to his wishes ; and you, my own sweet Margaret—you will smile upon us also, and join in a blessing on us. Need I say how joyfully I shall hear of the fulfilment of your hopes?—No, for you do not doubt it. If any one should breathe such a suspicion in your case, do not, I entreat, believe in it—believe your own Susan, and you will be happy.”

Margaret was silenced. She could only reply with tears, and it was a relief to her when Susan arose and left the room, saying, that she felt it necessary to be awhile alone.

Will she be deemed selfish or regardless of another's welfare who experiences a mingled emotion of joy and hope, when she finds, or thinks she finds, the sacrifice uncalled for which she was prepared to make ? Is it not rather to be expected, even of the most generous and self-denying, that, under such circumstances as Margaret found her sister in, she should have withheld from her the information that morning received of Hamilton's love for her, nor have long hesitated, in obedience to that sister's wish for silence, not to impede the prospect of a union with one whom she esteemed so worthy of her, by revealing a secret fatal to her own peace of mind, and in which she still hoped Mr. Montgomery might have been mistaken.

Occupied with these reflections, and utterly unable to turn her mind to any other, she sat down to inform Mr. Montgomery of what had happened—to acquaint him with her sister's engagement with Lord de Tracey, and to intreat him to be the bearer of the news to Mr. Hamilton.

“I will trust to you,” she said, “for the rest ; you will tell me how he bears it, and on that I will rest my hope.” With an anxious and a beating heart, she despatched her note, and then sat down to wait her father's return. Bet when she heard the sound of his horses's feet at the door, she felt her courage fail her,

and hastily running to Susan's room, she exclaimed, "Here is my father.—Oh Susan, think yet awhile of what you are about to do—it is still time to alter your purpose—it is still time to save yourself from——"

"Margaret," said Susan, interrupting her with a solemnity of manner which arrested her impetuous, though kind sister, "I thought you had given me your promise to save me from the only thing which I now fear—retrospection. I have chosen for myself—that choice will be sanctioned by a father's blessing—by the voice of an approving conscience. Shall it not also be blest by an only sister's best wishes?"

"Oh yes! it shall—it shall," said Margaret—"bless you—bless *him*, my own dear Susan," continued she, falling on her sister's neck, while mingled tears of admiration, of wonder, and of a hope which she scarcely defined to herself, that all she had heard that day was but a dream—that she herself might be the object of love, and that she should yet evince her devotion to him, in future days of happiness.

A gentle knock at the door disturbed their sympathetic silence. It was General Falkland. As he entered, the bright gleam of joy which suffused his usually pensive countenance was followed by a look of inexpressable tenderness, as he stretched out his arms kindly to his daughters, and folded them together in a long embrace. "God bless my dear child—my sweet Susan—send you every comfort which devoted love can bestow, and make you happy as your fond father desires."

Her heart was full. For a moment every thought, save the happiness of obtaining such a blessing from such a father, faded from her mind, and Susan felt as if that alone must banish every regret, and arm her with fresh zeal for the fulfilment of every duty; and, if she were mistaken in her judgment in accepting the offer of one whom she did not love, from such motives, could she be blamed? could she be denied the

sympathy of the most severe, had any such been acquainted with the struggles of her pure and virtuous mind, and known the power of those gracious principles which actuated each feeling of her heart?

It is, in truth, a dangerous experiment on the tenderness and weakness of woman's nature to enter the bonds of wedded life in the prime of youthful feeling, without "love's sweet constraint" to sweeten those trials of temper and of conduct which must attend the path of every earthly traveller, in whatever situation he be placed, and which, especially in such an one, is so beset with snares and temptations. Let those who, actuated by mercenary or other worldly views, depending upon their own prudence and discernment, undertake so perilous a task, pause ere they rush into such a danger. Let them not fear the reproach of the world in withdrawing a promise made under those mistaken views; but, if they have entered irrevocably on such a path, let them not shun the difficulties which lie before them—let them beware of comparing the merits of the one they have chosen, with those of others, whose love they cannot admit without the transgression of one of the most imperative of God's holy commands. Happy the woman whose tears of regret are restrained by the remembrance of that solemn voice, which we may "hear in *all* things whatsoever he says unto us," and which bids the married wife forsake all others; or if those tears do fall, when it is from the grateful consciousness of having been enabled to tread the path of obedience.

In the keeping of this and every other command, there is indeed a great reward.

Susan was aware of her heart's weakness, and she wished to triumph over it, because, by its indulgence, she might be exposing the vanity of her hopes, and certainly impairing the happiness of a beloved sister. She saw in Lord de Tracey only what was amiable in heart, and refined in manner, and, although she had

too much diffidence of her own charms to rely upon *them* as the pledge of his constancy, she trusted that she should best be enabled to overcome a fruitless hope, by being removed to another sphere of action.

When Margaret had spoken to her that morning, her thoughts had reverted only to the betrayal of her own affection, which she had most feared, and which she had now dreamed was discovered; but never did it enter her heart to conceive that that love was mutual; and she hoped that, by proclaiming at once the decision she had made with regard to Lord de Tracey, she should silence any suspicion which had arisen in her sister's mind, and leave her to the full enjoyment of an affection which she believed to be warmly returned by Hamilton.

When the burst of tenderness which General Falkland had betrayed on first meeting his daughters had subsided, he resumed his usual placidity of manner, and related with a smile of tranquil content the manner of his becoming acquainted with Lord de Tracey's happy prospects, and of Susan's consent to his long cherished hopes. He had met him, he said as he returned from a Nursery garden at Hammersmith, when he eagerly told him the joyful tale, and besought his easily granted approval.

General Falkland did not long dwell in speech on the satisfaction which his countenance and manner evinced on this occasion, for those who have experienced many of the severest vicissitudes of life are not wont to dwell unnecessarily upon scenes of excitement, whether prosperous or adverse. The long tried heart shuns the unnerving influence of exciting feelings, as far as nature will admit of their doing so, aware that the healthful tone, necessary to correct judgment, can only be obtained by reining in their violence.

General Falkland saw that his daughters required repose, and, recommending them kindly to partake of this hour of joy, with the consciousness of his entire

sympathy and approval, he retired to his own chamber, his heart full of grateful acknowledgment for many mercies, and commending his dear child to the care and guidance of that Providence in which he devoutly trusted.

Blessed moments! The sigh of intercession is never breathed in vain. Who can tell what dangers are averted from us by this unseen incense, which reaches the throne of the Most High, perchance from one unknown, but which we shall recognise in a better world, when love and gratitude shall tune our voices to the song of praise! Let it not be forgotten, in the enjoyment of our choicest mercies, that we may be in part indebted for them to the prayers of others, perhaps unnoticed or despised here; but with whom we shall form sweet companionship, when we shall know as we are known.

Susan, who felt the necessity of solitude to recruit the strength of her spirits, so highly excited on that eventful day, soon left her sister to meditate on the past, and to prepare herself to tread the path of trial she had chosen; but which her sanguine-minded sister hoped might prove a more flowery one than that which seemed to lie before herself.

The agony of suspense which Margaret endured, till she should see or hear farther from Mr. Montgomery, was only relieved by the hope which she would not allow herself yet to dismiss—that she was the object of Hamilton's love, and that his affection for Susan was but a reflected light of that flame. Of the once suspected attachment of Susan for him, she now ceased to think. She had but dreamt surely when such a thought awoke in her mind, for the acceptance of Lord de Tracey's offer had for ever silenced such a supposition. With these meditations hours passed away, but no letter from Mr. Montgomery—no news of him arrived—she could bear it no longer, and when evening came, she hastened down stairs, to enquire who had

called that morning on her father. The porter put into her hands a number of indifferent names, which she threw aside disappointed and vexed, and was preparing to cross the vestibule when he said: "Oh! I forgot, madam, a gentleman called about a quarter of an hour since, and inquired very anxiously whether any of the family were at home. As the General had given orders to admit no one, I told him all were out. He seemed much disappointed he had no card, but he left this note for the General." Margaret took it, and hastened with it to her father, for the hand-writing was familiar to her, and it recalled many associations of past days, now endeared to her by the thought that they were perhaps for ever gone. The recollection, too, that she had been the occasion of an unhappiness, which she feared the writer still felt, filled her heart with an interest she could scarcely define; and it was with suppressed breathing, and an averted eye, that she listened as her father read aloud the contents of Evelyn's note.

"I am only in town for a few days, but of course your honse is the first I have visited, and I am greatly disappointed to miss the happiness of seeing you. Let me know when I may hope to find you at home. With the offer of my kind remembrance to the Miss Falklands, I remain,

Dear General,

Affectionately yours,
ORMISTON."

General Falkland's face glistened with joy. "How glad I am, my sweet Margaret, that this dear friend should be in town. How provoking that he was not admitted. There, love, do write a line, to beg of him to come immediately; but stay, by the by, we are engaged to dine with the Sherbournes. Well, but perhaps he will come in the evening; will you ask him, love? Margaret hesitated. She did not wish to be

the person to make the invitation, yet feared disobliging her father. "Will you allow me, dearest papa," she said, "to acquaint Susan with his arrival first? She will be so glad, and she, you know, is the eldest, and will be so happy to write to him." "Oh! very well," said the General, glancing smilingly at his daughter, whose confusion he rejoiced to observe, for he trusted it was a symptom of that feeling which he most desired to know she entertained. The happy thought that she should see both his dear children united to those whom he so much loved and esteemed, filled his heart with grateful joy, and, full of serene content, he hastened to his toilette for Lord Sherbourne's dinner, which engagement had, in the excitement of that day, been almost forgotten by himself and his daughters.

As they drove from the door, General Falkland gazed with complacent admiration on his beautiful daughters—more beautiful, if possible, from the simplicity of attire which they had that day selected.

"I think, my loves, you have changed characters this evening, for Margaret looks grave and thoughtful, and Susan smiling as *you* were wont to be; but I can guess the cause, love," added he smiling, and taking Margaret's hand. "But you also shall be happy as she is I trust." Margaret returned the fond pressure, but tears rose in her eyes, and she was glad to change the subject. "I wonder who Lord Sherbourne has invited to meet you, I have no doubt there will be an overflow of savans for your benefit and poor Susan's, and I shall be seated between two old snuffy men, who will give us an account of the different strata of the Himalaya Mountains, or ask our opinion of the merits of oxygen and hydrogen. You will have the full benefit of Lady Sherbourne's practical exposition of the beauty of silence on one side, and Miss Sherbourne's similies on the other, while Miss Anne will probably be excluded to-day, till the evening, as her father does

not often permit more than one of his daughters to be exposed to comparison with more than one unmarried lady." General Falkland smiled, for the picture was a correct one, but he gently rebuked Margaret for being too severe on his friends.

Susan commented on the beauty of Lord Sherbourne's pictures and mineralogical specimens, and they were soon before his door, and duly announced in presence of their obsequious host, who grasped their hands successively ; but detained Margaret's long after her father and sister had passed on to speak to Lady Sherbourne, till, wondering at the cause of so much extra civility, she turned and beheld with astonishment, the figure of Lord Ormiston, who, while he appeared to be engrossed with her father's conversation, was gazing on her with a look of deep interest. He seemed as if he scarcely knew whether to advance towards her or not, when she also stood irresolute, after shaking hands with Lady Sherbourne and her daughters, and curtsying to the rest of the company who were assembled. The want, however, of any unoccupied chair, save one near the place where he stood, gave her an opportunity of favoring his wishes, without the awkwardness of appearing bashful before so old a friend, and he had pressed her hand, and heard her voice, before she could attend to the loud summons of Lord Sherbourne, to place herself on a couch, which he declared to be the only place fit for her, as she looked so ill. He handed her to it, and placed himself beside her, so effectually to preclude the possibility of approach to any one who dreaded his eloquence as much as Lord Ormiston, apart from any other consideration. Evelyn was soon obliged to direct his attention to Miss Anne, who plied his ear with a sentimental retrospect, in a voice and manner not to be misunderstood, and which plainly told him how much her admiration had increased, since his accession to the title and fortune of his uncle.

Margaret looked at him with a feeling of interest and of pity which she wished not to express; for the thought of him, as the companion of her happy childhood—as the kind friend of her youth—as the amiable and devoted being whom she had rendered unhappy; for while she saw him pale and dejected as he now appeared; and so altered since they last had parted, she could not believe that the reports which had reached their ears, of his projected union with Miss Somerville could be true—or if true, that it could be one which promised him that happiness which she so earnestly desired might be his.

But she was not long permitted to dwell on her own meditations, for the unceasing sound of Lord Sherbourne's voice, in her ear, was occasionally heard in the language of interrogation, to which she was forced to reply, and which gave openings for fresh volleys of flattery, from which she was glad to be relieved by the announcement of dinner. Fortunately for her, a Russian Count and Countess Olinska were of the party, so that Sherbourne gave his arm to the latter. "We shall not wait for Elliott," said he, as he did so; "but I must insist on my friend's obtaining his first notwithstanding. He relinquished another engagement, for the purpose, my dear Miss Margaret, of sitting beside you this evening—you will not disappoint him. "Oh no! certainly," said Margaret smiling, and taking the arm of Count Olinska, as he advanced with "*Aurai je l'honneur?*" The General proceeded with Miss Mitchell, the humble companion of the Countess. Miss Sherbourne followed with a look of triumph, holding the arm of a short, greasy-looking young man, with a broad face curly red head, and large diamond pin, who had been announced as Mr. Jenkins, and on whom she had cast many a languishing and tender smile, to repay him for the frown which Lord Sherbourne had alternately given to him and to his wife ever since his entrance.

Miss Anne followed, very cross at an old hungry looking professor of botany, who declared that the mingled fragrance of turtle-soup and oyster patties was to him far preferable, at that moment, to that of the choicest nosegay; but as she was immediately followed by her brother and Lord Ormiston, she endeavored to preserve the equanimity of her smile, in the hope of placing herself on the other side of so desirable a companion.

In this she succeeded, for the host of black, and snuff colored coats, which followed, were dispersed conveniently, in nobody else's place, and Lord Sherbourne's manœuvres had completely succeeded, with the exception of his eldest daughter's contrivance to be beside the man whom she liked as well as she could care for any one, and for which Lady Sherbourne and this unhappy girl were forced next morning to receive a long and not gentle rebuke.

Scarcely were they seated when a loud knock proclaimed the arrival of Mr. Elliott, who entered with a well assumed air of discomposure, while he apologised for his late appearance by saying that really people were such egregious bores—Lady Fanny Longton wanted him to buy a horse for her, and, when he went to dress, he found such hosts of torments in the shape of three cornered notes that he thought he never should get through them. Monstrous fine woman Lady Fanny—you know her, don't you, Miss Falkland?" said he, taking Margaret's hand with an air of patronizing condescension; "good pedestal—I told her so, and now she is so fond of that little foot of hers, that she wears her drapery *à la Bernoise*, rather too short certainly, but every body knows why she does it, and so it gives her a certain *eclat*. Depend upon it, my dear Miss Falkland," continued he, notwithstanding the look of contempt with which Margaret heard him, "depend upon it, nothing does a girl, or a newly married woman, so much good in the world, as to have

the name of somebody that is known connected with hers, as their friend—Don't be alarmed—I know your charmingly unsophisticated ideas; I do not mean as her *cavalier servente*. No, be assured I could never condescend to undertake such an office, were it to a goddess, but I have spoken of Lady Fanny in such a way that others look at her now, and I really think she will do very well, in spite of the malt scene, which had gone well nigh to make me give her up.” “In spite of what?” said Margaret, who could hardly refrain from smiling at so much absurdity. “The malt scene, but I will tell you about it.” Margaret looked up, and met the gaze of Lord Ormiston, who hastily averted his eyes, and she thought mournfully that she was still beloved. Mr. Elliott went on. “I very weakly consented, when at Lady D——’s last winter, to attend the county ball, where she and a large party were going. Lady Fanny was one of them, after dancing with all the Goths, there, till her face was actually disfigured, by that distressing degree of caloric which can only be produced by that most vulgar of all vulgar things—an English Country dance, she positively declared that nothing would refresh her so much as beer, and proceeded instantly to swallow a large tumbler of that dreadful beverage. I did not speak to her any more that evening, as you may imagine, but I was too good-natured to give her up altogether, and the next day I privately advised her, as a friend, to relinquish these propensities, and I flatter myself she had not again so far transgressed the rules of female propriety.”

“A glass of beer,” said Margaret, “if you please,” turning to the servant behind her chair.—Mr. Elliott stared, and looked aghast: but Lord Ormiston, who had listened to the previous conversation, smiled with a look which Margaret could not misunderstand—which told her, better than words could have expressed, how truly he retained the admiration and the love

which years had fostered, and the cheerfulness which she had for a moment experienced was succeeded by a train of melancholy thought, which rendered her insensible to the neglect with which Mr. Elliott treated her during the remainder of the dinner.

Margaret thought the dessert endless, and Lord Sherbourne's lengthened disquisitions on some antediluvian skeletons of animals, which Professor B—— had that morning lectured upon, scarcely served to beguile the time more pleasantly than the egotism of Mr. Elliott's late conversation. Her attention however was suddenly roused by hearing the latter pronounce a name which could not be uttered without awakening in her breast the most lively emotions. "What a very odd fellow he is," said Mr. Elliott; "he had just settled to go down to Epsom with me next week, and now he is off, Heaven knows where!—to the North Pole for ought I know, but every one knows he's fairly cleaned out."

Margaret's face assumed a deadly paleness—she looked imploringly to Lord Ormiston. Her glance seemed to say: "Could it be true.?" Evelyn, whose generous nature prevented his experiencing the triumph which another might have hoped for from such circumstances, felt a thrill of contending emotions which prevented utterance for some time. At that moment Lady Sherbourne gave the signal for the departure of the ladies, and Margaret scarcely knew how her tottering limbs supported her to the drawing-room, where, throwing herself on the first seat, she remained for some moments stupified with wondering grief.

"How pale you are, my dear," said the little shrill voice of Countess Olinska, with her own peculiar foreign accent, which had a kindness grateful to poor Margaret's bewildered senses. "I am afraid you have been too gay lately, and yet I wish you to be more so, for I am going to give a ball, on purpose for your sister and Lord de Tracey; and I hope Lord Ormiston

also will still be in town next week—but I speak too much, you are really ill,” continued she, as she threw her shawl over Margaret’s feet, and put her vinagrette into her hand. “There, my dear, be quiet a little, and I will occupy you, or you will have the whole host of the Sherbournes upon you directly.” So saying, the good-natured Countess placed herself so as to conceal the distressed countenance of Margaret from the rest of the party, and, having particularly requested that nobody might disturb their *tête-a-tête*, she endeavored to direct the mind of her young friend from her melancholy reflections, by her amusing observations on the company they had just left.

“I am very much astonished, my dear, that our good hostess has any children alive.”

“Why?” said Margaret, endeavoring to be attentive.

“Because she does so torment them with over care, they must be bored to death. But what will she make of the youngest progeny? Do you think it possible any girl would consent to take Mr. Jenkins, *pour tout potage*? He really looks too sooty, so black and greasy!”

She continued to rattle on in the same strain, but Margaret’s monosyllables became less and less frequent, at length the good Countess perceived that the hand she had held dropped from her grasp, and the closed lids of poor Margaret’s eyes betrayed that she had fainted.

Susan was by her side in a moment; the usual restoratives were applied, and she rallied, but, notwithstanding many useless entreaties, Margaret was glad to accept Countess Olinska’s offer to take her home in her carriage, in which Susan insisted on accompanying her; and a message was left for the general, when he should come from dinner, to apprise him that fatigue had obliged her to retire thus early.

Aware of the excitement his daughters had gone through that day, the General was not surprised to find it had thus affected them, and he was therefore easily persuaded to remain, for the amateur concert which Lord Sherbourne had prepared, as he thought, with unrivalled skill, for the exhibition of his daughters' talents. One member of the family at least, was made happy on this night, which was looked upon as an eventful one, by the manœuvring old gentleman, from the fact of his having obtained the society of two great matches for his daughters, so free from all rivalry; but alas! it was not in the way he had expected.

Mr. Jenkins proposed to Miss Sherbourne, and was accepted; and, notwithstanding the scolding, and storming of her disappointed father, the tears of Lady Sherbourne, and the sneers of her more fastidious sister, the happy pair were soon after united, and Lord Sherbourne reduced to the consciousness that he had but one forlorn object for his tyranny and his manœuvres to work upon.

CHAPTER XVII.

" Oh, blame her not, where zephyrs wake,
The aspen's trembling leaf must shake ;
When beams the sun through April's shower,
It needs must bloom the violet flower ;
And love, howe'er the maiden strive,
Must, with reviving hopes, revive !"

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE cause of Mr. Hamilton's sudden departure for the continent remained a mystery to the sisters. In a hasty note to Mr. Montgomery, which the latter showed to Margaret, he said that circumstances connected with his best interests had induced him to make this sudden decision, but declined entering into any explanation, as he said that by him they would be easily understood—he wished not that others should divine them. The world agreed with Mr. Elliott in believing his pecuniary difficulties to be the cause of his sudden departure, but the friends of his youth knew this to be an unfounded surmise. The estate, which he still possessed, would have been sufficient to afford him a life of competent ease in his own country, had he not been swayed by other motives, the nature of which might have been guessed by one sister, and feared by both the Miss Falklands, and they therefore remained silent on the subject. It was the only one on which they each felt constraint—the only one which had ever occasioned an interruption to the interchange of their hearts ; and perhaps, in reality, they better understood one another's sentiments on this subject than they were aware of. Duty and affection, those powerfully-combined motives of action, lent courage to the one, to enter with cheerful composure on the path she had chosen, and supported the endeavors of the other to assume the calmness she could not feel, while a hope, which every outward circumstance seemed to bely, still lingered in her bosom.

It is perhaps the most difficult situation in which to feel and to judge correctly, when with an unfeigned desire to discern the will of Providence, in events which most deeply affect us, we are still left in darkness. Nature's voice will then be heard loudest. Our fondest wishes continually rise before us, dressed in the garb of reality, an imaginative mind regards her illusive pictures as signs of promised fruition, and the heart still clings to objects, which are perhaps never to be obtained—which ought not thus to have distracted that serenity, without which we cannot tread the path of duty as the true in heart would wish to do.

It was thus with Margaret, and though the smiles with which she spoke of her sister's projected marriage, and of the happiness she looked forward to, when, after a short separation, they should again be assembled at Walron castle, concealed her anguish to the world, they could not do so to those who loved her.

She hoped that Susan would not discern the care which corroded her buoyant spirit, and caused the bloom of her cheek to fade away; but she was deceived. She feared at times that it might be so; for she could not discover much of joy in the manner with which Susan listened to her anticipations. She could not discover much of gratified affection, when she saw her with her affianced lover. She could not perceive any eagerness in her mind to accede to Lord de Tracey's frequently urged solicitations that the day of their union might be fixed; and which he pressed the more to avoid a separation which might become unavoidable, since necessary business would soon call him to France, where he possessed an estate lately bequeathed to him, and which he had not yet visited.

Margaret felt unwilling to confess to herself the regret which Evelyn's absence at this time occasioned. During the few days he spent in town, the delicacy of feeling which he had evinced on that trying occa-

sion, when he who knew her heart's secret had witnessed her sorrow ; the kindness with which he had sought to soothe her, without intruding upon her the faintest remembrance of the past, as connected with himself, the benevolent and active endeavors he had used to place Lord de Tracey in the fairest light, to the eyes of his promised bride ; and the pleasure his society had afforded to her beloved father, all conspired to inspire her with regret, when, on the last day of his stay in town, he spent the morning with them, and strove, as he bade them adieu, to do so, without the betrayal of one selfish emotion, and whispering comfort to her, while his own heart was bursting. The wishes for her happiness which he had uttered were such as would have been the death-blow of his own, if he still felt as once he had ; as it is impossible but *once* to feel in this world of changes.

There may be much of passion—much even of real tenderness—much of devoted affection from heart to heart, in a second love ; but where is that fond enchantment, that nameless, but refined, ecstasy which thrills the soul in a first and early love ? Like the first flower of Spring—the first breath of morning—once exhaled it is gone—and for ever. Mid-day may shine more brightly and more lasting beauties may bloom, beneath the fostering ray ; but where is that essence of first love, so fragrant, so pure, so fugitive ? It is gone, never to be recalled.

As Evelyn sat mournfully and alone in the carriage which conveyed him from town, his mind dwelt on the necessity of bidding adieu, for ever, to the blissful dream of his youth ; and, after revolving in what manner he could best secure her happiness whom he prized beyond all else in the world, his thoughts turned to the interesting girl whom he was about to meet.

Lost to happiness himself, he might still, he hoped, secure that of another. The effort was a mighty one

—so to control and school his own feelings that, while he tendered his hand and his heart to the devoted girl, no lurking weakness should betray the sacrifice, either to her, or her father.

Mr. Hamilton had declined his generous offer, in terms of the most heartfelt gratitude, and in such a manner as to raise himself in Evelyn's esteem, and secure his friendship. In this letter he made use of expressions which astonished Evelyn, asserting that he had been mistaken as to the particular interest of his heart; and concluding, by wishing for him that happiness which he had so nobly, under a delusive impression, surrendered to him.

The suspicion to which these expressions gave rise were, however, dispelled by the approaching marriage of Susan, and the long remembered conversation he had had with Margaret, at Walrond Castle, had convinced him of the nature of her sentiments, and the utter impossibility that such could have been entertained had she not known them to be mutual. Her distress at Lord Sherbourne's dinner, on hearing of his sudden departure—the manner in which she had evinced that regret to be the sole cause of her depression of spirits during his stay in town, and the evident gratification she had shewn at the expression of his favorable wishes towards the completion of his hopes—all conspired to remove every doubt from his mind of their mutual love.

Of Caroline Somerville's attachment to himself he could no longer doubt. Her secret had been betrayed; and she could not disguise from less penetrating eyes than those of her anxious father, the cause of her late increase of suffering, which kind friends had not failed to communicate to Lord Ormiston. Aware as he was of the excellence of her principles, the sweetness of her disposition, and the devotion of her heart, he trusted that time might effect that change on his own, which would enable him to lay a better claim

to her affection than he could yet do; and he was now hastening to accept Mr. Somerville's invitation, which had surprised him; because he thought there was a want of delicacy in thus pressing him, with the knowledge he could not but possess of his daughter's feelings, and without the knowledge of their being reciprocal.

It was with a beating heart that Evelyn alighted from his carriage, at the little village of Farnham, and walked towards Mr. Somerville's rectory, where he had, many years ago, spent some happy days; and where nature, decked in her simplest garb, was adorned by the hand of care and order, and smiled then, as now she did, in summer's bright array, yet failed to bestow that peace and serenity which here he had once experienced in the society of his friend. There stood the aged yew tree, bending its melancholy shade over the white gravestones, which a holly hedge encircled with its glossy leaves. There rose the silvery spire, now glistening to the rays of a setting sun. From beneath the clustering evergreens, which twined their branches to the highest windows, he saw the parsonage, with its remembered air of sobriety and repose, beautified at this season by the flowers, which threw their flaunting blossoms round its walls, and decked the neat parterres, which were planted on either side of the walk, to which the neat green wicket opened from the village lane.

The evening song of birds, nestling among the tall elm trees which shaded the green fields beyond; the lowing of cattle, and the distant shouts of children returning from school, were the rural sounds which alone greeted his ear, as he advanced and paused, with the fulness of his heart, to meditate on all that had passed since the last time he had visited this beautiful and sequestered spot, to which his imagination had often fondly turned, connected with one whom he knew to be a stranger to the quiet beauties of En-

glish scenery, and which he had once allowed himself to hope he might have enjoyed with her.

It was an hour in which to dream of days gone by. Who has not enjoyed the luxury of such contemplations, even when the retrospect is most painful? It is so soothing; and to the religious mind so peace-breathing. And it is at such an hour the bruised in heart have often experienced the consolations which they alone can know.

When Evelyn reached his friend's door, he felt more able to overcome every selfish regret than he could have expected; and it was the utterance of his heart, when he expressed his joy to his revered friend, at finding himself once more beneath his hospitable roof.

Mr. Somerville was much changed since they parted, although so short a time had elapsed. The benign expression of his countenance was endeared by that touching sorrow, which a parent's ear never fails to claim from sympathising hearts; and, as he spoke of Caroline, the tears crowded down his cheeks, with such affecting, yet such chastened, grief, that Evelyn felt how great a blessing it might be in his power to bestow.

"Shall I not see her to-day?" inquired he, with an interest which increased the pressure of her father's hand, as he held Evelyn's in his.

"I will go and prepare her," rejoined Mr. Somerville, "for so agreeable a surprise; but she has scarcely risen from her sofa this last fortnight, and the doctor has enjoined an absence of all excitement. However, she cannot long remain in ignorance of your arrival; and I so earnestly hoped that you would not disregard my invitation, that I have already endeavored to prepare her to meet you.

So saying, Mr. Somerville left the room, and Lord Ormiston threw himself on a sofa, and gazed around him as one in a dream. There was something in the

very tranquillity of the scene which encouraged that dreaminess of thought, which sometimes attends those whose hearts have been much exercised by contending feelings, and from which it is difficult to be aroused, till necessity for action compels us to realise, as it were, our mental powers, for the welfare of others; if not for ourselves.

There stood Mr. Somerville's arm-chair, placed beside a couch on which Caroline's shawl was left, as if she had been lately present. A bible lay beside her father's chair, and his spectacles marked the place where he had been reading. The piano-forte was open, and flowers thrown on the music that lay on the desk. On one table the dress of a cottager's child, partly unfinished, was placed carefully by the books and vases which alternately adorned it. The windows opened to the ground, and the fragrance of mignonette, mingled with that of the Scot's roses, which he had given to Miss Somerville, and which now bloomed around the porch, wafted to and fro through the air.

The room had an air of elegance, such as female care can alone cast over daily habitation, and sanctified, as Evelyn knew that dwelling to be, by piety and virtue, he felt the serene influence of these qualities as breathing over every object, and shedding its blessedness on his own heart.

The door opened softly, and, leaning on her father's arm, Caroline entered the apartment. Lord Ormiston strove to utter something of the happiness of being again in her society, but the words died away on his lips. *She* could not speak, but as if gathering her utmost power to breathe the sigh of joy, which was too much for her, she stretched out her pale hand towards him, and, almost borne by her father, she reached the sofa on which she was wont to recline. Her tall figure, which before seemed to belong to one of ærial birth, than to immortality, was reduced to a still more shadowy appearance. The flush, which mantled on

her pale cheek, settled the alarming brilliancy, and lit up her sunken blue eyes to a starry brightness. Lord Ormiston was shocked beyond the power of utterance; for who that has ever gazed on the ravages which consumption makes on the young and beautiful, but has experienced a mournful interest, uncontrollable by any effort of reason, unlike that which aught else can inspire, and which, connected as it is with the *certainty* of an event, which in other cases, hope whispers may still be averted, fills the mind of the beholder with those reflections which awe, yet purify, the soul.

No longer did he regard her as the being for whom he must surrender every other hope; nor with any other emotion save that of the tenderest pity—endear-
ed by that most endearing of all sensations, the consciousness that he possessed the power of sweetening the remainder of her days on earth, and smoothing the pillow of a sickness, which was soon to be the means of conveying her beyond the reach of worldly care or sorrow.

Not thus did she regard the being on whom her pure heart's strongest affection had been bestowed. With the fallacious impression, which the nature of her disease carries to the mind of its victim, she read in Evelyn's affectionate countenance and tender manner, the earnest of that which she had never ceased to hope for, and, brightened as her anticipations were, by the presence of her beloved one, her strength seemed to rally each moment, and she spoke on every subject with an energy and vivacity which astonished and delighted her father. Again his hopes of her recovery returned, and again and again he thanked Evelyn, as being the means of restoring his child to his love and his care.

Days and weeks passed on, and found him still watching by the side of Caroline, till he almost partook of the delusiveness of her own thoughts, and imagined she was gradually recovering.

There was upon her beautiful countenance a radiance which, though it at times appeared unearthly, was called forth by no other sentiment save that of woman's love. So high and holy indeed is this affection in the breast of one pure and young as Caroline Somerville, so intimately connected with aspirations after all that most dignifies and ennobles human purpose, that we cannot behold such a nature rendered happy in the indulgence of so refined a feeling, without admiring the goodness of our Divine Creator, who has been pleased to sanctify and to bless, by his approval, a sentiment which, when entertained by virtuous minds, strengthens every holy resolve, and sheds a halo over the most trifling circumstances of human life.

With what a heightened pleasure did Caroline now receive the visits of her father's poor parishioners, and hear the blessings poured down on her beloved one, who had, since his arrival in that village, taken the place of Caroline in visiting and relieving the sick and aged; and assisted her in every plan she had formed, but been unable, since her increased weakness, to execute, for their comfort and support. How did she now enjoy the morning hours, when permitted to walk around her little garden, or to sit in the flowery arbour at noon, while Evelyn read aloud to her. Sometimes she sang with her guitar, with that peculiar clearness which often renders the voice of those who suffer as she did, so peculiar and beautiful. With what delight did she witness the restoration of her father's happiness, who now daily, more and more, indulged the fond hope that she was indeed gradually recovering, and beheld, in Lord Ormiston, the future husband of his child, and the comfort of his own declining years.

Mr. Somerville had once entertained some fears respecting the former attachment of Lord Ormiston, but the report which he had in a conversation one day with him was confirmed by the latter, of the Miss Falkland's marriage, had served to dispel that fear;

besides which, he could not imagine that one so honorable, as he knew his friend to be, would have placed himself in his present situation—in daily, almost hourly, intercourse with Caroline, did he not entertain for her those feelings and intentions which he trusted would one day, with her returning health, be realized.

As time wore on, Lord Ormiston himself removed from Mr. Somerville's mind the remaining distrust which his silence might have created. Caroline's improved appearance, united to the glow of happiness which his presence and unvarying kindness threw over her beautiful countenance, deceived *him* no less than her apparent increase of strength did her father and herself; and he felt himself called upon no longer to keep them in suspense as to his intentions. In a letter which he received one day, about six weeks after his arrival at Farnham, from General Falkland, he read the following words:—

“My dear Susan is to be united to Lord de Tracey in a few days, and I need not tell you how happy I feel in the bright prospect which opens before that dear child. Her spirits have been lately much depressed, no doubt from the delay which she has feared, owing to Lord de Tracey's necessary journey to France, but which his solicitations have persuaded me to prevent, by fixing the day of their union. She suffers also, I am grieved to say, from witnessing her dear sister's regret in the absence of our friend Mr. Hamilton. I have long attempted to blind myself to their attachment, but it is one, I fear, not to be overcome either by absence, or the disapprobation of a parent. I will not, however give up the hope that time may effect a favorable change on the tastes and habits of that amiable but imprudent young man, and I shall then no longer feel it a duty to withhold my consent from the fulfilment of their wishes, which God grant may be for that dearest one's happiness. I had once hoped she might set her affections on one more worthy

of her; but that hope is passed—she has confessed all to me, and I have suffered too much in my youth, from a similar disappointment, to wish to blight a young heart by that most bitter sorrow. God bless my dear Evelyn, and send you all that is best for you, and all that I judge you to be so worthy of.”

Lord Ormiston was drawing beside Miss Somerville when the letter arrived. She had requested him to execute a plan for a cottage, which her father had promised her to build for a poor parishioner, and she looked at his work, as it proceeded, with that interest which all he did excited. She watched his countenance as he read, and observed the changing lines of his expressive face with eager enquiry. He folded the letter, and tried to continue his occupation, but his hand shook, and he found it vain to proceed.

“I wish,” he said, rising and going towards the window, “I wish the rain would cease, for I feel as if the air would be so pleasant.”

Caroline sighed—it was a deep and melancholy sigh, and he turned towards her. Her face was hid in her hands, and her color mounted to her temples till the transparent veins seemed as if they would burst.

“Miss Somerville, are you ill,” said Lord Ormiston, advancing to the sofa, and holding Eau de Cologne towards her, “let me give you some of this,” he said, “to put upon your forehead; these mild wet days do not agree with you, I fear.” As she lifted her hand from her face, Evelyn saw she was weeping; the big tear rolled down her cheek, and she was unable to reply. “Tell me,” said he, tenderly, “what has caused your emotion? I trust I have not done or said anything to grieve you; believe me such was far from my intention.”

“No,” said Caroline, with strengthening breath, “you have indeed been all that is kind and gentle, and good—would to God! you were as happy as you deserve.”

"And am I not happy, dear Miss Somerville," said Evelyn, with a mournfulness which was itself an answer to his question, "am I not happy in possessing such dear friends, in flattering myself that even *my* society is of some use to them?"

"Thank you, thank you; heaven knows what use you have been to my beloved father—what comfort, what happiness to myself"

She blushed deeply, and again averted her tearful face, for she feared she had been too ingenuous; "but when I see you thus harassed as you are by emotions which, for the sake of others, you strive to conceal, can I cease to sympathize with one who deserves my sympathy, though he will not deem me worthy of his confidence?"

"Miss Somerville," said Lord Ormiston, taking her cold hand in his, and speaking with a voice and manner which seemed to struggle vainly for composure; "I have waited for strength more confirmed, and of longer duration than I can yet hope you possess, to impart to you that which I have the presumption to think might not be a matter of indifference to you; but since your kindness has condescended to observe, and to regret, that my heart has been exercised by trying emotions, the nature of which you have been hitherto ignorant of, and that you will look upon their disclosure as a proof of my regard, I will no longer withhold my secret. I feel deeply convinced that to no woman more high-minded than yourself could a man intrust his happiness and his honor did he feel worthy of seeking to obtain so dear a privilege with an undivided heart. Such a heart may proudly look towards a hope replete with so much happiness, enriched, as you are, dear Miss Somerville, not only with nature's loveliest gifts, but with so pure a heart—so sweet and angelic a temper, and such a heavenly mind."

"Nay," said Caroline, smiling through the tears that flowed fast as he spoke, "do not so flatter me;

my ear is but little used to such courteous phrases as these, and my heart disapproves of them as untrue."

"No," replied Evelyn gravely, "I would not flatter you; I speak not now in trifling language to beguile an hour; I would that my feelings were thus free to court the blandishments of such society as your's with a heart entirely unreserved. But that time may come. I leave the result of my future happiness in your hands. Caroline, I have loved another—you are acquainted with my early history. You know that since the loss of my parents, I dwelt beneath the roof of General Falkland, from childhood, almost till now, with the exception of those partial absences which visits to my relations and friends, and occasional short tours on the continent, occasioned. With his daughters I was brought up as a brother, but time revealed to me the secret of my love, and months and years spent in the society of her on whom I lavished, ere I was well aware of it, my heart's first and strongest affections, nourished the fruitless passion. It was not returned—I read my doom in her affection for another—I heard it from her own lips. Since that time I have striven to overcome an attachment which Providence seemed to oppose, and I have in part succeeded, but the memory of the past will return, even when blest with another hope, dear enough to banish sorrow from the heart of any one who resolved to entertain it. Proud enough to dare me thus to humble myself before you, and having confessed the secret of my former unhappiness, to seek to render myself worthy of suing for the hand of one so pure, so worthy of all that is best, as you are. I will not deceive you. Had I not been made acquainted with the determination of Miss Falkland (Evelyn spoke with increased agitation) to unite herself with the man of her choice, I had not presumed to betray to you what I have done. Honor had forbade the disclosure, for I do not believe that any other event could have enabled me to triumph over

my regrets. You saw me first under other circumstances—you then might judge what alone could have withheld me from uniting that affection which may well inspire to the admiration I could not but entertain for your beauty and your virtues. Say, Caroline, do you think, in future days, you could feel towards me as I have the presumption to think you once did? Can you accept of a blighted heart such as I have to offer? If the tenderest care, the most unremitting attention to your every wish could give you happiness, I shall find it mine to bestow such on one worthy of far beyond that which I can ever offer.”

Long before Evelyn ceased to speak, the emotion of poor Caroline’s heart betrayed more than the words with which she strove to reply to his communication, and with mingled tears of joy and sorrow, she confessed her long cherished affection for him, and her earnest hope that she might yet live to be all to him which he had lost, though, in her humility, she expressed and felt how ill the daughter of a village clergyman could seek to compete with one of high birth, and of refinement and beauty, so much exceeding what she could pretend to.

Mr. Somerville was soon after informed by his young friend of what had passed, and with a serene trust, such as those whose minds are chastened, like his, to receive every intelligence of earthly concern for his beloved one’s future peace and comfort, he blest them both with heart and voice, and returned to the duties of his calling, more and more penetrated with a sense of the love and goodness of his Divine Master.

“And is it possible,” said Caroline, one day, as she placed a bunch of flowers, she had just gathered, in Evelyn’s hand, “is it possible that she did not love you?”

Lord Ormiston’s face grew deadly pale. “Hush, dear Caroline,” said he, “you have taught me, already

—still teach me to forget that which I *must* not.....” here he paused,—“which I *would* not remember.”

Caroline sighed deeply, and entered the house. “The evening is so beautiful,” she said, I “should like to stay out, but I fear a return of my cough. Perhaps you will read to me.” The windows were closed—she heard Evelyn’s voice and was again happy.

Like the sobbings of an infant, the tears, which his words had occasioned a moment before, were dried as quickly; and when Evelyn paused from his reading, to look upon her, she had sunk into a gentle sleep.

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